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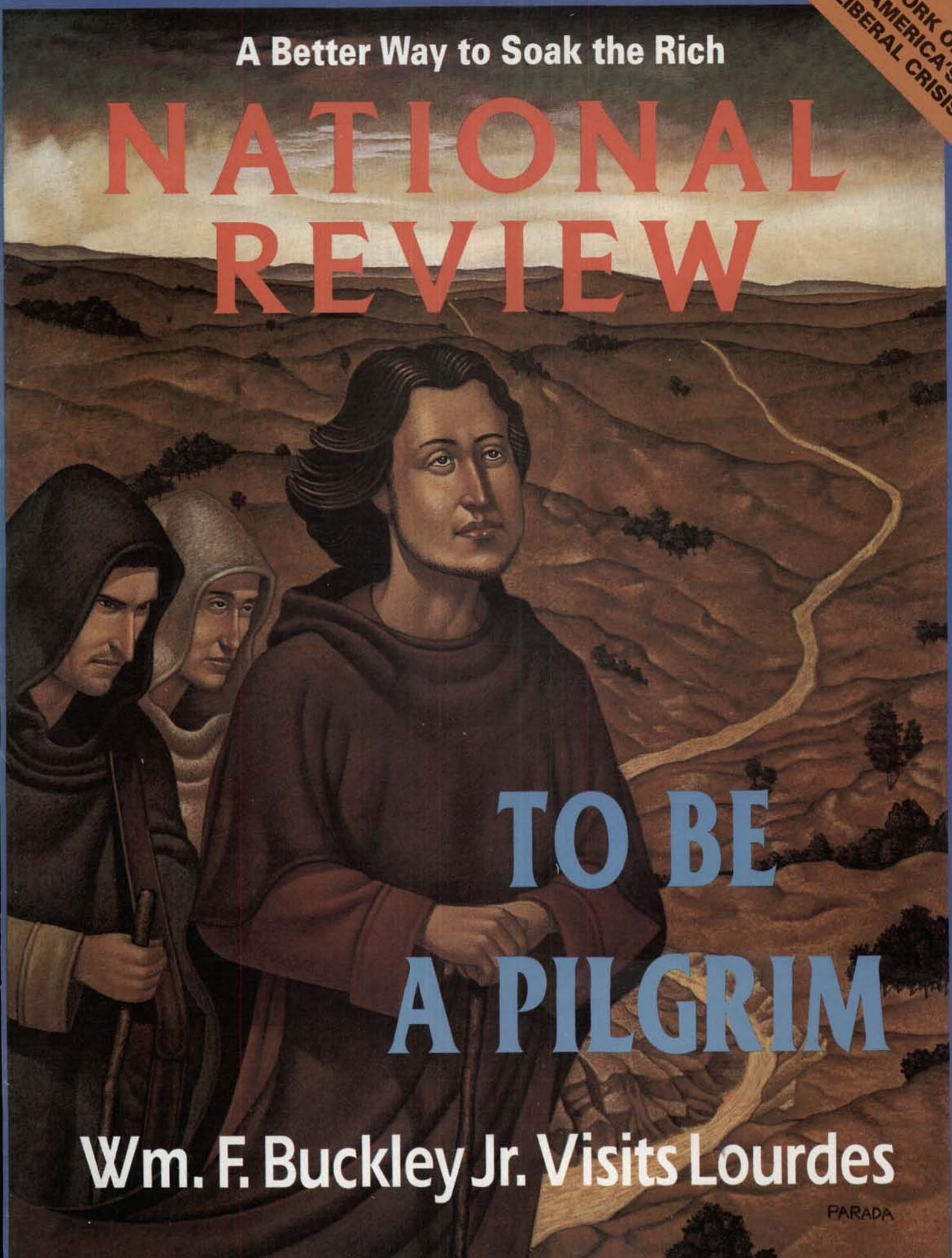

TO BE A PILGRIM

Wm. F. Buckley Jr. Visits Lourdes

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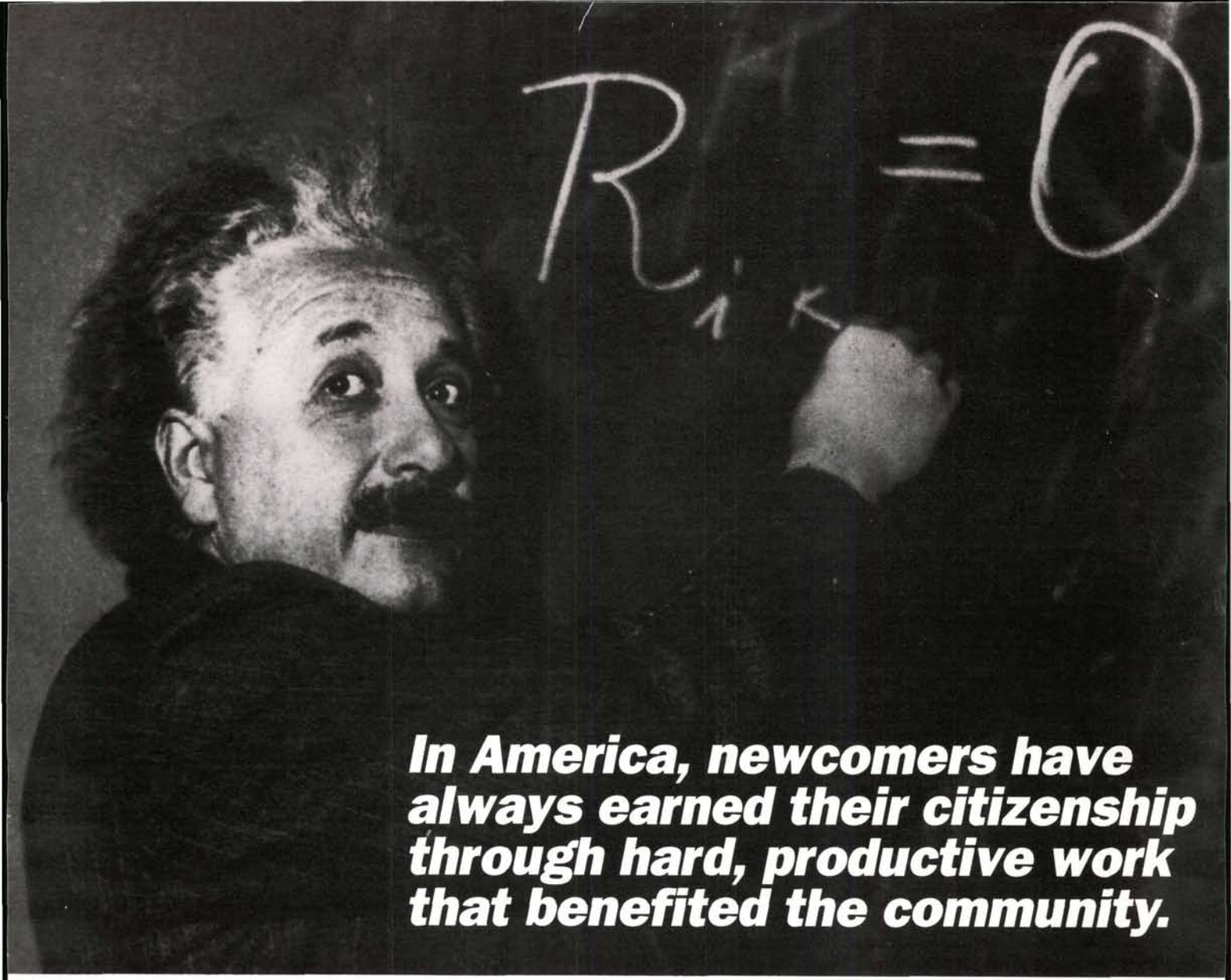
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NATIONAL REVIEW

AUGUST 9, 1993 VOL. XLV, NO. 15

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LETTERS

A Third Way

I am chagrined to disagree, for the first time, with Vin Weber ["Bosnia: Strange Alliances," June 7]. He is right that Clinton's policy has been weak and inconsistent to the point of inspiring contempt among America's friends and enemies alike. But he overstates the case in saying that the GOP faces the choice of retreating to isolationism or urging the Administration to commit U.S. forces in the form of air strikes in Bosnia.

Ronald Reagan and George Bush rebuilt our armed forces and restored public confidence in them through judicious and decisive (except in Lebanon) use of those forces to achieve vital national objectives—like reversing Soviet imperialism, maintaining the European balance of power, punishing terrorist states like Libya, and preserving the free flow of oil at reasonable prices. A limited objective, with forces measured to the need, characterized each of these deployments.

Vital national objectives like that are not present in Bosnia. Pan-Serbism represents only a minimal threat to the European balance. Bosnia has nothing the U.S. needs. Moreover, it is doubtful Bosnia meets the other half of the test for use of forces—namely, whether the U.S. can bring its power to bear to solve the problem at a reasonable cost, and within a reasonable time.

I do not mean to imply that the U.S. should do nothing. Mr. Weber is correct in urging the re-arming of the Bosnians, even without payment. Continued, and even stronger, economic and diplomatic pressure on Serbia is called for. Most importantly, neighboring states, including Macedonia, ought to receive economic and military assistance, and perhaps a unilateral diplomatic guarantee of their territorial integrity.

Not every crisis requires an heroic response. Republicans are wise enough to reject both isolationism and over-eager commitment without vital interests at stake. It would be best to avoid the use of force until either we face no alternative, or those who understand the use of force as a matter of policy return to the White House. America will not look kindly on us if we recommend that President Clinton take a course for which he is obviously ill equipped.

George T. De Angelo Jr.
West Peabody, Mass.

Battle over Britain II

John Charmley's latest letter ["Letters," June 21] makes clear that critics correctly interpreted his biography of Winston Churchill. What the book hints at, Mr. Charmley's letter makes explicit: Churchill blew it by keeping Britain in the military conflict against Hitler. Britain gained from that policy, he writes, "nothing that could not have been achieved at a less expensive price."

Give us a break, professor! Once France fell, Nazi Germany could not have been beaten by anything short of the "Grand Alliance" of the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and America, and nothing less than the combination of Soviet arms in the East and Anglo-American landings in the West would have done the trick. While the Soviets were annihilating over 100 German divisions in mid 1944, the Western allies were destroying virtually as many in the battles that raged in France from D-Day to the liberation of Paris. If the British and Americans had settled for the non-belligerent role of the "Arsenal of Communism" (assuming Hitler had *allowed* the British to play such a role), millions of German soldiers would have been, not in France fending off an Anglo-American invasion, but on the eastern front, battling the Soviets. In that situation, the Germans would almost certainly have been advancing on a front east of Moscow, not retreating toward Berlin.

"Whisky Rebellion? That's a likely story!"

In short, Professor Charmley is dead wrong in his most basic assumption that "Hitler would have been stopped . . . by the Soviets" without British and American forces also engaging the Nazis on the battlefield. Once Britain's governing Tories had blown their early chances to stop Hitler (e.g., the Rhineland in 1936), Britain had no choice but to use military force, and on a grand scale.

Had Britain and France employed that force with sufficient vigor in the fall of 1939, the awful choices from June 1940 on would have been avoided. But Britain and France did not, and British choices were reduced to two: 1) make peace and cede the continent to Hitler; or 2) keep up the fight, until sufficient power could be brought to bear to defeat Hitler. To accomplish the latter, as Churchill understood, meant somehow bringing in America at a minimum, and probably the Soviets as well. As it happened, it took both, *with* Britain, to do the job.

I agree with Professor Charmley on one point: World War II ended in a victory "which led to the Cold War." But to conclude, as he does, that there was "nothing much" in such a victory for the British is to ignore that the only alternative, by June 1940, was a Hitler triumph, which would have been followed by a *Kalte Krieg* and a whole lot worse.

Michael B. King
Seattle, Wash.

Mr. Charmley lives to promote his little book. The Churchill Society's "expensive tour" last year gave him his first live audience—ironic that he's added us to his impressive enemies list.

Mr. Charmley just doesn't get it. Churchill was *prepared* to risk all the things Charmley rightly deplores—the decline of British power, smothering socialism, the end of empire, the strengthening of Stalin—*in order to stop Hitler*: to fight, as he put it, "until each of us lies choking in his own blood upon the ground." Britain in those days was prepared to die with him.

Duty, honor, country: how quaint they sound. Today, in the name of equality, we discriminate. In the name of the humanities, we fund anti-religious non-art. In the name of free speech, we broadcast enemy propaganda in wartime. Under the circumstances, it is scarcely surprising to find Mr. Charmley defending the appeasement of Nazis in the name of conservatism.

Richard M. Langworth
International Churchill Society
Hopkinton, N.H.

Fools rush in. So permit me to attempt

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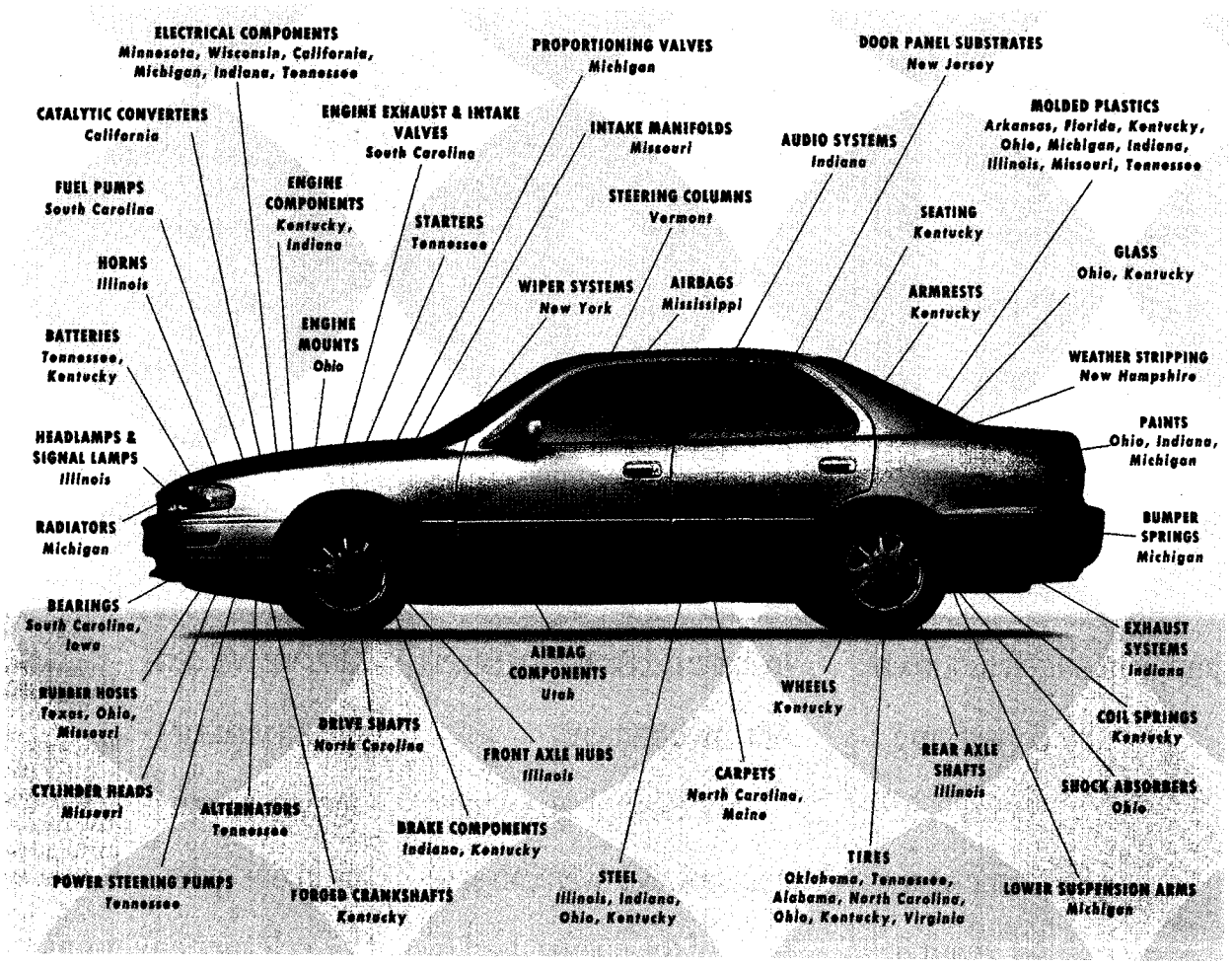

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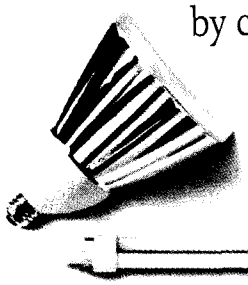

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the thankless task of mediating between the *enfant terrible* of English history, John Charmley, and Richard Langworth, American head of the International Churchill Society.

Their mutual recriminations on the subject of who is, or is not, deserving of the honorific "conservative" reminded me of a crack made back in 1945. Victorious General Eisenhower, returning to London from the Continent, said: "It's great to be back in a country where I *almost* speak the language."

Even as Churchill and Roosevelt spoke "almost" one language, so do Charmley and Langworth. Language is too frail a ladder for scaling the barriers erected by history. This circumstance Charmley delights in throwing at his opponent: "As the product of a society which was, in its origin, a revolt against legitimate authority, Langworth evidently has a problem understanding conservatism."

Touché. I accept—as did Whittaker Chambers—that by the standards of the Old World the term "American conservative" is an oxymoron. But *pace* Charmley, Neville Chamberlain was less an understanding conservative than a miscalculating Birmingham businessman. Blundering into war, he left it to a half-American remnant of the aristocracy to struggle in a losing cause, that of the Empire. True, Winston Churchill pursued a mirage, the belief that defeating Hitler would help restore Imperial prestige.

It could not have in any event, and Franklin Roosevelt would be damned if it would. Yet the Prime Minister had no realistic alternative to going along with the villain who refused to join him for a conference in London, but obediently trundled off to Yalta at the behest of Stalin, Alger Hiss, Harry Dexter White, and company.

In closing, let me dig my grave in Charmley's eyes. I confess to having thoroughly enjoyed a Langworthian tour of Chartwell, Blenheim, Banbury, and miscellaneous other "ruins for which Americans visit Britain," as Charmley so charmingly puts it.

R. E. Steussy
Eugene, Ore.

A Stage for Anti-Semitism?

Richard Grenier's writing on AIDS-related theater and literature was insightful, articulate, well constructed, and patently anti-Semitic ["Books, Arts & Manners," June 7].

What begins as an arresting description of both the content and the epistemological position of his subject ends up, in spite of its many other virtues, as a broad stereotype of Jews as Godless, hedonistic, materialistic supporters of homosexuality, as audience as well as author.

I do not have a problem with Mr. Grenier's right to wax anti-Semitic, especially being the "son of a Jewish mother," and admire his critical excellence. What I do find shocking is *NR*'s acceptance of such an article on the grounds of the damage it does to your intellectual integrity and aesthetic.

NATIONAL REVIEW is the only publication that I read (usually) cover to cover, and the inclusion of this article was disappointing.

Robert A. Geller
St. Louis, Mo.

Mr. Geller is very courteous, and respects my "right to wax anti-Semitic," and I suppose I should respect his right to catch me waxing anti-Semitic. But I have to say that I am pained at his charge all the same. And surprised.

Has Mr. Geller seen any of the plays about which I wrote? The leading Jewish figures are homosexuals and most of the leading homosexuals are Jews. The characters talk endlessly about Jews and homosexuality, homosexuality and Jews. The playwrights themselves find a correlation. Am I not to notice this?

One of the main points of my article is that this indulgent attitude toward homosexuality represents a reversal of the Jewish past. My argument is that, in comparison with other faiths, Jews' regular attendance at worship and their obedience to the ancestral tenets of their religion is remarkably low, and that Jews have thus become something of the advance guard of the modern, secular man in the United States (though lagging behind most Western Europeans in this regard). If Mr. Geller has a better explanation for this confluence of secular Judaism and homosexuality (which these playwrights themselves proclaim) I should be glad to hear it.

—RG

Wake Up and Smell the Coffee

Digby Anderson is of course free to cook his coffee into sludge, serve it in whatever vessels he considers "proper," and consume it only at such times and under such conditions as he deems appropriate ["Books, Arts & Manners," June 21]. However, someone should remind Mr. Anderson that the English do not make basic rules for Americans. I believe this principle was established a couple of centuries back.

Noel Stetson
Lancaster, Ohio

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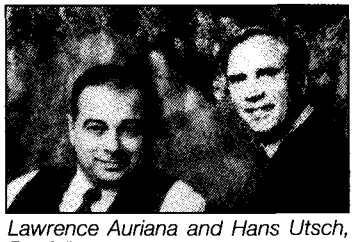

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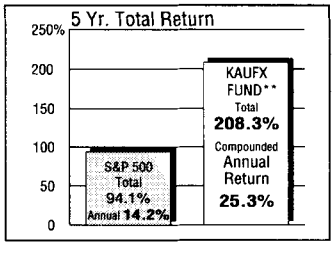

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FROM THE EDITOR

Stop Press

■ Dan Seligman, writing in our "Decline of American Journalism" issue, pointed out that political correctness was spreading to the newsroom.

Under the rubric of racial and gender "diversity," a (liberal) uniformity of opinion was being enforced on the press. Stories that were likely to offend the proliferating committees of minority, women, or gay journalists were either not covered, or covered in a "sensitive" (i.e., dishonest) way.

Now William McGowan, writing in the Manhattan Institute's *City Journal*, cites chapter and verse of how the New York press downplayed the Crown Heights riot, obscuring its plain anti-Semitic character, glossing over the racially inflammatory remarks of black "leaders," and providing a context of soothing excuses (alienation, despair, etc.) for the violence.

Mr. McGowan contrasts this sanitized coverage with the *New York Times*'s prompt condemnation of the murder of a black youth, Yusuf Hawkins, by a mixed-race gang, which it blamed in part on the white racism of the people of Bensonhurst ("Racism, Accomplice to Murder").

One might similarly compare the *Times*'s editorial on the first Rodney King jury's acquittal ("shocking . . . brutalized faith in law") with its comment on the Lemrick Nelson acquittal ("New Yorkers . . . need to hear a jury's sobering message").

With the publication of the official Crown Heights report, we can see that Mr. McGowan did not overstate his case. Indeed, one can derive some sour amusement from comparing its criticism of Mayor Dinkins's inaction with the earlier considered judgment of the *Times* editorial board: "When Crown Heights erupted . . . Mr. Dinkins was at his peace-making best."

Did the *Times* get a Pulitzer for this politically correct coverage? That suggestion comes under the heading of "Too good to check."

■ We do not often endorse candidates for the presidency of international financial institutions, but Leszek Balcerowicz would clearly be a better president of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development than the EBRD deserves.

After all, the former Polish finance minister, whose "shock therapy" put Poland on the road to free-market recovery, knows how to reconstruct East European economies.

But his candidacy is being opposed by the French government, which claims a "moral right" to nominate its own man. Since France's first nominee, Jacques Attali, spent twice as much on personal travel and decorating the Bank's headquarters as on reconstructing Eastern Europe, this "moral right" is somewhat tarnished.

The U.S. should have no hesitation in supporting the Polish candidate. Mr. Balcerowicz represents a natural free-market alliance between the East Europeans and the Anglo-Americans against the protectionist bureaucrats of the Paris–Brussels Axis.

I would say more, except that I don't want to prejudice the Clinton Administration against him.

■ Judge William Sessions, unceremoniously dismissed as director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, has at least one solid reason for complaint. He was always a strong advocate of affirmative action to promote women and minorities in the FBI. No doubt he was sincere in this; but he must also have calculated that it would win him media and liberal support.

If so, he will have been disappointed that no one rallied to him on these grounds when the Administration started to leak against him. The moment Mr. Sessions became politically vulnerable, he also became just another Republican appointee.

It is an important lesson in modern ideological politics—and one which, we may be absolutely certain, no other Republican appointee will ever learn.

—JOHN O'SULLIVAN

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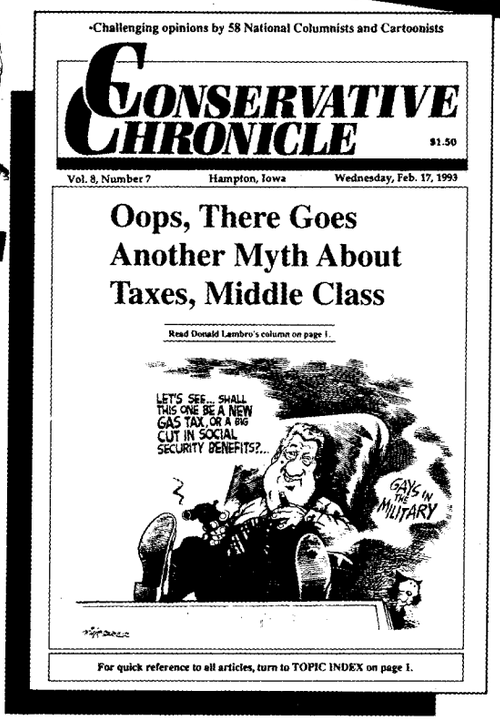
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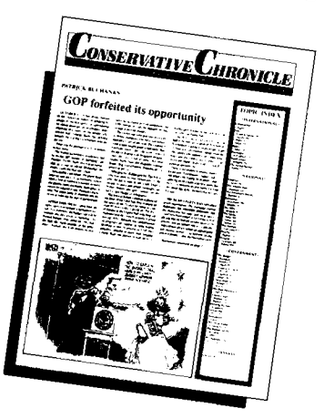
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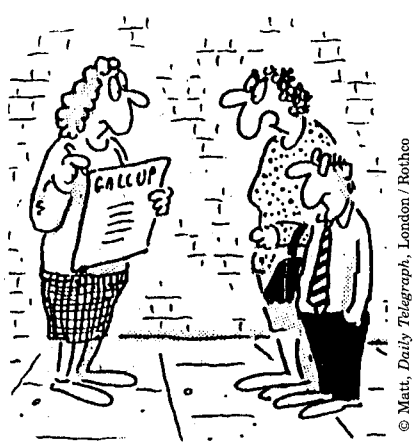
FOR THE RECORD

■ Since **Bill Clinton**'s inauguration, Republicans have won 24 of 38 contested special state legislative elections. They've also won control of the Wisconsin state senate for the first time in twenty years. . . . A study by Clinton campaign pollster **Stan Greenberg** found that 70 per cent of voters over the age of 30 who went for **Ross Perot** in 1992 voted for **Ronald Reagan** and **George Bush** in previous elections. . . . NRCC chairman Rep. **William Paxon** thinks Perot is a good thing for the GOP because "he does a lot to galvanize our kind of voters to do more than just vote." . . . The RNC has gained over 250,000 new under-$100 donors this year. In 1992, it had 400,000 total. Typically, at least 90 per cent of donors are Republicans. Recently, however, only 70 per cent have been Republican, 22 per cent independent, and 8 per cent Democrats. . . . Steaming at the **Chamber of Commerce**'s support of Clinton's economic policy, the House **Conservative Opportunity Society** decided to boycott the Chamber's annual Spirit of Enterprise award ceremony at which, typically, some 100 Republicans receive praise for their pro-business voting record. The next day the Chamber announced its opposition to the budget reconciliation bill.

■ In Ohio, conservative Lieut. Gov. **Mike DeWine** has strong organization going for his Senate bid for the open seat of the retiring **Howard Metzenbaum**. **Amy Kauffman**, a veteran of **Bruce Herschensohn**'s Senate run, is chief fundraiser. An early poll gives DeWine a 7-point lead over Metzenbaum's son-in-law and touted successor, **Joel Hyatt**. Liberal Republican and former head of NIH **Bernadine Healy** is expected to challenge DeWine for nomination. . . . In California, Rep. **Michael Huffington** is talked about as possible GOP candidate to challenge Sen. **Dianne Feinstein**, though Huffington doubts he'd run if Herschensohn decided to make another go at it. Also Rep. **Chris Cox** hopes to get GOP nod. . . . In Michigan, Gov. **John Engler** plans to seek re-election next year. In his three years in office, 83,000 have gone off welfare, 6,000 state jobs have been cut, and the state liquor-distribution process has been privatized.

■ In 1990 Gov. Clinton told **Polly Williams** that he was "fascinated" by the Wisconsin assemblyman's school-choice program. He added: "I'm concerned that the traditional Democratic Party establishment has not given you more encouragement." But when Mrs. Williams asked the President to offer words of support to her program on his trip through Milwaukee in June, the White House did not respond. . . . **Robert Boorstin**, official spokesman for **Hillary Clinton**'s health-care task force, described a delusion he had when he worked for the **Dukakis** campaign: "I broke into the presidential suite at the Lafayette Hotel. I thought it was the Starship *Enterprise*, and I didn't want it to take off without me." Fortunately for him, it never took off. . . . Some 88 per cent of senior congressional staffers believe price control will be included in Clinton health-care package when it is released, according to a survey by **Bill McInturff**'s Public Opinion Strategies. Those surveyed believe there is significant support among Congress for price controls, although over half believe price control will not be effective.



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"No, he doesn't think his parents are too strict."

■ Seventies feminist activist and former New York mayoral candidate **Carol Bellamy** was named to head Peace Corps. . . . **Andy Stein**—former city-council president and Democratic challenger to New York Mayor **David Dinkins**—told *New York Post* that he consulted **Shirley MacLaine** before deciding to drop out of politics after 25 years. . . . At his swearing-in ceremony, **John Nalley**, a new member of the New York City school board, held lavender-bound copies of *Daddy's Roommate* and *Heather Has Two Mommies* instead of the Bible. . . . Manhattan's borough president, **Ruth Messinger**, recently described the New York Philharmonic's **Mozart**, **Rossini**, and **Mussorgsky** program as "multicultural."

■ **Strobe Talbott**, Clinton's Russian-policy czar, said in 1992: "I'll bet that within the next hundred years . . . nationhood will be obsolete; all states will recognize a single, global authority. A phrase briefly fashionable in the mid twentieth century—citizen of the world—will have assumed real meaning" by the end of the twenty-first century. . . . "Horrors" around the world "show how foolish it was to talk about the new world order," says British Foreign Secretary **Douglas Hurd**. We have "ways of reducing the horrors but you have to deal with each situation as it is," he adds. "The greatest mistake it to pretend at the beginning that it is easily solved." . . . Bosnian Vice President **Ejup Ganic** warned that Europe would face a wave of terrorism if it backed a partition of Bosnia. . . . On July 4, Gen. **Ulisis del Toro** waved goodbye from a Russian cargo ship as last members of Russian brigade sent to Cuba during Cuban Missile Crisis headed home. . . . Republic of China Foreign Minister **Frederick Chien** says Taiwan has 22 supporters in UN General Assembly for readmission of island nation for second China seat.

■ The Secret to Longevity: Penn State's *Town & Gown* recently saluted **Helen McCord**, a centenarian, who attributes her longevity to never having voted for a Democrat.

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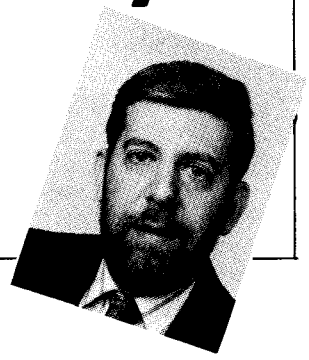

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> Just how incompetent a teacher can be and still keep the job was illustrated by an extreme case in South Carolina, where a school tried to get rid of a teacher who had been warned repeatedly about her poor teaching and poor English. At a hearing where she was given a ten-word vocabulary test, she could neither pronounce nor define the word "agrarian." She could pronounce the word "suffrage" but defined it as "people suffering from some reason or other." The word "ratify" she defined as "to get rid of something." In her own defense, she said: "I'm not saying I was the best, but I don't think I did more harm than anyone else." A judge ordered her reinstated.

Walter Williams, himself a distinguished professor of economics, sums up Dr. Sowell's achievement in the *Washington Times*:

> "We all know about the poor and deteriorating state of education in America, but we don't know all the reasons why. *Inside American Education* gives us the fullest list of particulars that I have seen . . . names, dates and places on how the education establishment from kindergarten to college is destroying our children's prospects for the future, all the while taking taxpayers, parents and private foundations to the cleaners."

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THE WEEK

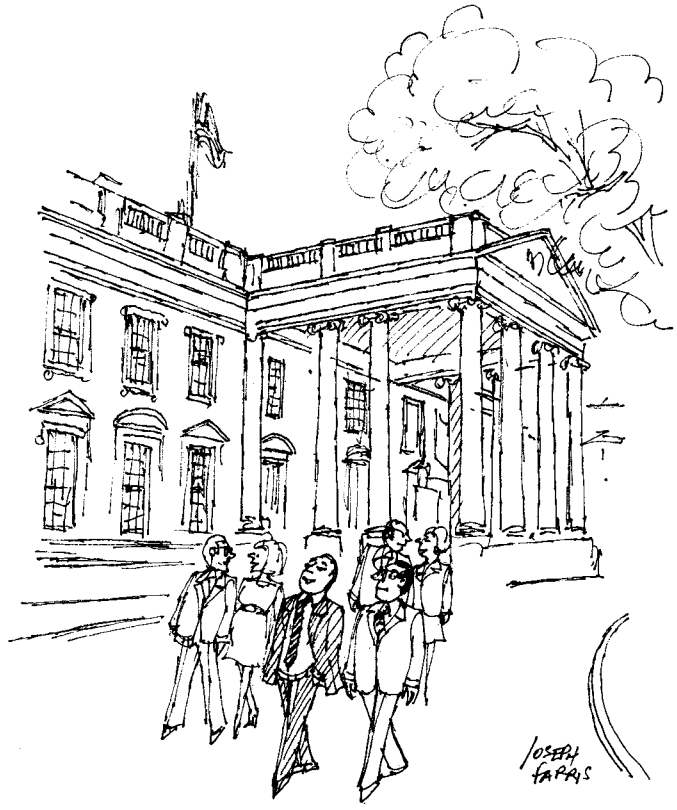
■ Cost of Government Day fell on July 13 this year, and gets later with every deficit reduction.

■ Republican senators are saying that the mid-session budget review will show a $50-billion drop in the deficit projected for 1993. So can we cut $50 billion off the tax burden? No, actually, because the Clinton Administration is refusing to release the review until its deficit-reduction plan has been passed. Bob Dole, Thad Cochran, and other Republicans not unreasonably want to know the size of what it is they're reducing. If we ain't broke, don't tax us.

■ The firing of FBI Director William Sessions may be justifiable. But nothing Mr. Sessions was accused of rivals what the White House did in firing seven travel-office employees, tossing the lucrative travel contract to friends, and misusing the FBI to suggest venality on the part of the victims. Yet the perps have kept their jobs and suffered nothing worse than reprimands. Nor is the President himself guiltless of such shenanigans. According to Lisa Schiffren in the August *American Spectator*, the Clintons ran up a record of lavish living at state expense during his Arkansas governorship. He had his own Lincoln Town Car, whose personal-use value he never declared on his tax returns. (One of the charges against Sessions was that he didn't declare his use of a government limousine as income.) And he enjoyed a huge personal expense account—an annual $51,000 just for food, for example. Most deliciously, the Clintons, while out of office in 1981 and 1982, hired a nurse for their daughter—Dessie Sanders, who had taken care of Chelsea in the Governor's mansion as a "security guard" on the public payroll—and furthermore failed to give her Social Security number. The strong suspicion is . . . but we may never know, since the Clintons refuse to release their records on Miss Sanders or any other baby-sitter. Some of these are small matters, but smaller matters have hurt or wrecked the careers of many people in Washingotn—including the FBI Director Bill Clinton has just cashiered.

■ It would be churlish to question President Clinton's offer of partial compensation to the victims of the Midwestern floods. But taxpayers must consider whether other federal programs may have exacerbated the scope of the disaster. Free-marketeers and environmentalists have long maintained, for example, that federal flood insurance encourages overbuilding in flood-prone areas. And what about those who do *not* have flood insurance? Should they be accorded the same benefits as those who have for years paid (admittedly subsidized) premiums? Equity requires that flood insurance, if it is to be provided at all, be mandatory, with premiums set at actuarially sound levels. Even so, flood insurance is a trivial financial burden compared to other potential federal liabilities. The government also offers crop insurance, war-risk insurance for airplane and ship owners, and political-risk insurance for certain foreign-investment projects. These, in turn, are dwarfed by the potential burden of federally subsidized mortgage loans, student loans, debt issued by farm credit banks, and pensions insured by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, as well as the still underfunded potential liabilities of deposit insurance. None of these programs has been discussed in the current budget debate. If we're lucky, the floods will alert us to the potential risks before the Deluge.

■ A well-placed bomb in Senator Dole's office one sunny July morning could have silenced—momentarily—the American immigration debate. All the key advocates for relaxation and for restriction met, civilly enough, to put their opposing cases before the Republican Senate leadership. The senators were polite, if prudently noncommittal. However, the fact



"I think I'll go along with the President on this bill. He gave me a nice warm pat on the back."

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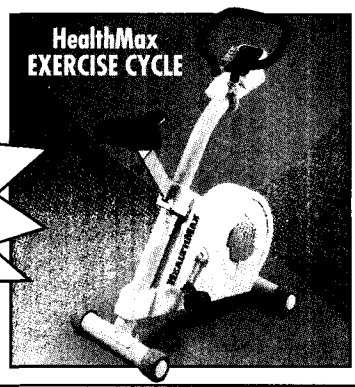

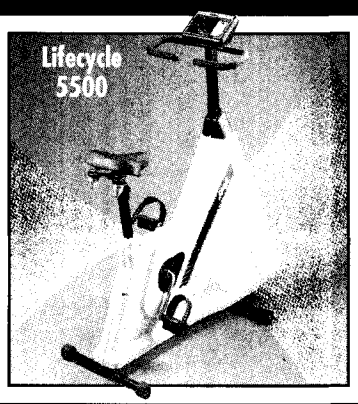

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that the meeting was held at all shows that this most profound of all issues facing the United States as a nation is finally on the verge of getting into politics—but in a possibly misleading, and even potentially dangerous way. An early consensus seems to be developing that illegal immigration is the only problem. But although illegal border crossings are thought to exceed a million a year, many illegal immigrants go back. The net increase in the illegal population in the U.S. seems to be only—make that "only"—some 150,000 to 300,000 a year. Annual *legal* immigration, plus refugees, is currently running at three or four times that number. The helmsmen of our ship of state should not, in navigating the breaking wave, forget the far greater storm behind.

■ The Washington Redskins are under pressure again to change the team name. This time they are threatened with real reprisals: some protestors want to cut off their municipal-stadium funding unless the allegedly derogatory name goes. But the name isn't derogatory, any more than Lions, Broncos, and Forty-Niners. It implies warrior virtues. On the other hand, there is no reason taxpayers should subsidize anything as profitable as a pro football team. So keep the name and end the funding.

■ Singapore fell in 1942 because its guns were pointed toward the sea; when the Japanese attacked, they came by land. So with the liberals who seek to protect New York City from racial unrest. Such upheavals, they believe, are provoked by police brutality, or by white thuggery. When the danger appears from a different direction, they are helpless. Such is the conclusion that must be drawn from Mario Cuomo's long-awaited report on the Crown Heights riot, in which black thugs chanting "Heil Hitler" rampaged through the streets for four days, trashing stores, assaulting passersby, and murdering one young man, Yankel Rosenbaum. Mayor David Dinkins and his police department didn't know what to make of it. They believed assurances from their underlings that the streets had cooled down, and ignored repeated and urgent reports that they were boiling out of control. Perhaps the most grotesque detail of the riot was a press conference the mayor and his police commissioner gave on day three, at which they congratulated themselves for "great restraint." Only when Dinkins revisited Crown Heights (he had gone to Rosenbaum's bedside on day one) and was met by a shower of rocks and bottles did the cops begin to respond in force. David Dinkins is no innocent victim of an unfortunate mindset. He became mayor by offering himself as a pacifier of black grievances, which had been stoked by police and white misdeeds. All mayors, black and white, Democrat and Republican, take heed. The first duty of a good social order is order. The foremost threat to order comes, not from rogue policemen, but from punks who, whenever they appear, however they misbehave, whatever color they are, must be stopped. A politician who acted on such a program would win the grateful votes of law-abiding citizens of all races.

■ Supporters of a five-day waiting period to buy a handgun should meet one steel-nerved woman in Woodbridge, Virginia. A death threat from her former boyfriend prompted the woman to buy a semiautomatic handgun on Friday, June 25. At about 3 A.M. on Tuesday, June 29, he broke into her bedroom, brandishing a bayonet. She shot him to death. For her, gun-control measures of the sort supported by Democrats nationwide—including gubernatorial candidate Mary Sue Terry in Virginia—would have meant a wait of five days, plus an eternity.

■ *Harper's* quotes a notice recently posted in the University of Wisconsin library, urging women who have been "stared at by men" to "report the problem." "Please do not let yourself be victimized. If you become aware that someone is staring at you, *do not tolerate his behavior*. . . . Please be willing to stay to talk to the police." If only such precautions had been taken at Yale a few years ago, Hillary Rodham could have saved us all a lot of trouble.

■ Fresh from his modified triumph in Tokyo, President Clinton wants the G-7 to reconvene for an international "jobs summit." As it happens, however, Europe has already tried most of the policies advocated by the President. With disastrous results. We quote from Alan Murray's recent *Wall Street Journal* column: "In examining Europe's stubbornly high rates of unemployment, the [OECD] report notes the expansion of unemployment benefits is one possible cause. (The Clinton Administration has pushed to extend jobless benefits.) It also cites the role played by high minimum wages in European joblessness. (The Clinton Administration favors a substantial increase in the U.S. minimum wage.) And the report says there is evidence that payroll taxes tend to discourage hiring and raise structural unemployment 'over the short to medium run.' (President Clinton's

So Long, Dr. Elders

Once again, pointing forward like Moses,
Mr. Clinton ineptly proposes
  One more nominee who's
  Got them shouting "J'accuse!"
As what's surfacing wrinkles their noses.

W. H. VON DREELE

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wife is urging him to adopt a new payroll tax of about 9 per cent to finance an overhaul of the health-care system.)" Perhaps Boris Yeltsin will be invited to provide the necessary balance.

■ And not just on the economy. The Clinton Administration has formally renounced the Reagan Administration's so-called "broad" interpretation of the ABM Treaty. In 1985, the Reagan team demonstrated that the ABM Treaty of 1972 actually permits development and testing of space-based anti-missile technology. The Clintonistas have now, predictably, fallen in with the zealots who have always hated the idea of strategic defense, clinging to the doctrine of "Mutual Assured Destruction" (MAD) which *requires* that we leave our population vulnerable. But there is a poetic justice here. Since the Patriot–Scud duels in the Gulf War, there has been a quiet bipartisan consensus that anti-missile defense is a field whose time is coming. The irony is that this consensus is now joined by the Russians, worried by the missiles proliferating in the nearby Middle East. They would now be happy to modify the ABM Treaty if need be. *Na zdorovye!*

■ Washington, D.C., declared another moratorium on violence, during which "only three homicides" were committed, down from the record seven murders during its previous moratorium on violence.

■ The Department of Transportation, tending to its unfathomable business, put on display a poster of ten prominent homosexuals to encourage tolerance, but one of them was Eleanor Roosevelt, and that's asking too much at NATIONAL REVIEW.

Friends of Lani

SIX MONTHS into the Clinton Administration, the fight over Lani Guinier resembles a dogfight in the early days of the Battle of Britain. Though she went down in flames, new waves of like-minded appointees keep swarming over the horizon.

Roberta Achtenberg became Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing at HUD. As a gay politician in San Francisco, she wanted the city to reprimand the Bank of America because it supported those notorious homophobes, the Boy Scouts. Thomas Payzant, another Scout-basher, became Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education. Former Penn president Sheldon Hackney was tapped to head the National Endowment for the Humanities, though he was such an acolyte of PC that he let black campus radicals confiscate the press run of a student conservative newspaper without reprimand.

Still awaiting confirmation are Tara O'Toole, slated for Assistant Secretary of Energy, who belonged to a Marxist feminist reading group in the early Eighties, and Joycelyn Elders, tapped for Surgeon General, who as director of the Arkansas Health Department scorned pro-lifers for having a "love affair with the fetus," and who backed condom distribution on the grounds that schools teach kids "what to do in the front seat; now it's time to teach them what to do in the back seat." And the President's Assistant Secretary of Defense for Democracy and Peacekeeping looks to be Morton Halperin, the former National Security Council aide who spent the last two decades denouncing the FBI and the CIA.

This hit parade confirms something about the Democratic Party, which many moderates and even a few conservatives forgot during the last campaign. So many of its warm bodies are on the Left. Even if Bill Clinton were what he said he was, a Democrat with a difference, he would be forced, by ideological demographics, to fall back on the same old stuff. There is no evidence, of course, that Mr. Clinton feels any dissatisfaction with the talent pool available to him. A former Vietnam War protestor, he is indifferent to radical pasts. A beneficiary of a captive black vote, he endorses schemes of ethnic and racial balkanization. A liberal on sexual politics, he supports fellow evangelists for the cause.

But the fate of the Clinton appointees also shows something about the GOP: its fear of a fight. Messrs. Payzant and Hackney sailed through the Senate; Miss Achtenberg faced little trouble. Dr. Elders may have some, but chiefly because of financial irregularities. Only Mr. Halperin has aroused some preemptive ire from, among others, Senator John McCain, who was in a North Vietnamese prison camp while Mr. Halperin was filing lawsuits.

This faint-heartedness seems to follow a pattern. Republican officeholders seem most leery of joining battle on social issues, though they can utter the proper slogans at election time. They do not even see that fights over bad nominees would weaken the Administration and energize their own supporters. Keep up the silence, and they may face bad appointees all the way to the year 2000.

Don't Speak Its Name

HALF A YEAR ago we expected President Clinton to have his way and remove completely the ban on homosexuals serving in the military. Fortunately, we proved wrong. The "don't ask, don't tell" policy that he appears likely to accept is a reasonable one, and indeed very largely reflects current practice in the armed forces. If legally crafted to withstand challenge in the courts, perhaps reinforced by legislative clarification from

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Senator Nunn, this policy could settle the dispute to the satisfaction of reasonable people.

This episode has, however, implications which bear reflection. It reveals, first and foremost, the alarming inability of this President to function as Commander-in-Chief. Bill Clinton did not have the force of character, the moral authority, or the political skill to overcome the opposition of Senator Nunn and the generals. Indeed, although it is a good thing that the Joint Chiefs of Staff won, there is something troubling about the spectacle of their Commander-in-Chief meekly accepting their terms for his surrender, as negotiated by their immediate superior, the Secretary of Defense.

On a happier note, the military virtues of discipline and comradeship received a boost, as did public awareness of the distinctiveness of military life. Still more important, the debate marked a key victory in the country's culture battles. Conventional sexual behavior and morality was shown to have stronger social roots than the media normally allow.

Had Mr. Clinton delivered on his pledge to the gay lobby, he would have opened the way to the next controversy: redefining the family to mean just about anything. Without in any way justifying hostility toward homosexuals, we can feel reassured that broad public support for the nuclear family—Mom, Dad, and kids—has been demonstrated, and a social preference for heterosexuality reaffirmed. Who would have thought, a generation ago, that one would be grateful for such a small mercy? Still, let us appreciate such successes as conservatives can gain at the end of the sexual revolution—they have been few enough.

On the Road

PRESIDENT Clinton's trip to Tokyo and Seoul was his second big foreign-policy excursion. All in all, he made a vigorous show of American leadership and claimed "breakthroughs" in both the Uruguay Round multilateral trade talks and the bilateral trade squabble with Japan. But the Administration's claims were overblown. At a time of weak political leadership in all the Western countries, it *was* important that the Uruguay Round of GATT not unravel. But Mr. Clinton's claim that Japan agreed to quantitative bilateral "targets" for reducing the trade imbalance was quickly denied by the Japanese. We doubt that much was achieved here—which is nothing to be sorry about, since "managed trade" is a chimera anyway.

Nor were we impressed by the President's politicking among the Japanese people over the heads of their government. Given the ambiguous result of the July 18 Diet election, the U.S. is likely to be dealing with many of the same institutions and officials for some time to come. They won't forget.

But in South Korea, the President pleasantly surprised us—at first glance. We had expected him to spend his time lecturing the South Koreans on human rights and the ozone layer. Instead, correctly, he focused on the security danger. The peninsula is one of the main tinderboxes on the planet, and he reaffirmed the U.S. "vital interest" in defending our allies, South Korea and Japan, against the North Korean threat—and thus also defending Asia and the U.S. against Japanese acquisition of nuclear weapons. His visit with the troops on the DMZ was good symbolism, and he issued a tough warning that any North Korean use of nuclear weapons would meet with an annihilating response.

Only when we read the fine print were our worries rekindled. We see no sign that Mr. Clinton recognizes how hard it will be to live up to all the U.S.'s necessary commitments while his Administration is devastating defense spending. His threat to retaliate vigorously for North Korea's *use* of nuclear weapons, while welcome, is an evasion of the more immediate issue of preventing its *acquisition* of nuclear weapons. The Administration sees "diplomatic progress" in North Korea's willingness to keep on talking! What North Korea is really doing is stalling as it goes all-out to finish building its bomb. Mr. Clinton's policy on this—his first real crisis—is looking more and more ostrich-like. The world will notice—and present him with more such crises.

Queer Notion

DAILY, it seems, there are journalistic reports of biological breakthroughs that take us within striking distance of an understanding of the causes of homosexuality. These reports are often impressively accurate in their representation of the physiological mechanism involved, but less cogent in explaining the social consequences if some physiological causation were established.

This is not surprising. The reports tend to misconceive the meaning of "biological" (as opposed to environmental) causation, and then to see a given causal explanation as answering all questions about volition, normality, and morality. *All* behavior is, of course, biological in the sense that some entity in the brain is affected; if someone tells you to think of a purple elephant and you do, the physiology of your brain has been altered. However, "biological" in the context of homosexuality refers to a physiological factor that in some sense *precedes* the development of homosexuality and predisposes an individual to become a homosexual.

It seems most likely (though it has yet to be con-

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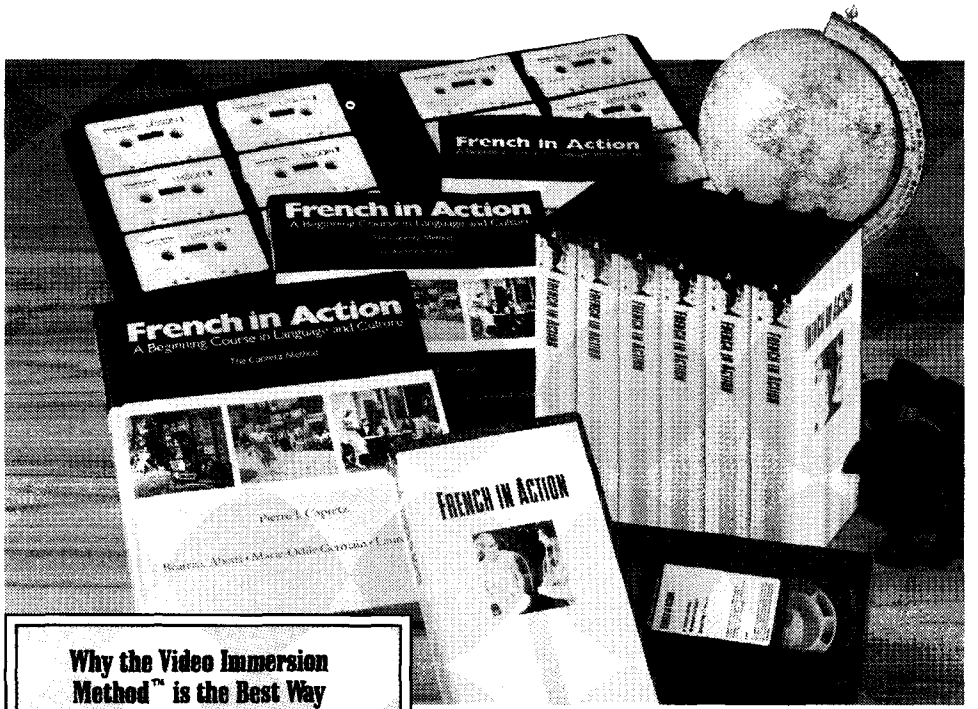

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clusively demonstrated) that homosexuality has a biological basis. However, it is even more likely (indeed it has been conclusively demonstrated) that most or all homosexuality requires an environmental, as well as a biological, push. The fact that half of all the identical-twin brothers of homosexuals are heterosexual renders it exceedingly unlikely that much homosexuality is caused by biology alone.

Put another way: Bob lacks the predisposing physiological factor for homosexuality and will not become homosexual no matter what his environment. Bill possesses this predisposing factor, but he will become homosexual only if he encounters the appropriate environment. (What that environment is is a subject of constant argument among psychoanalysts, psychologists, and sociologists. But then what isn't?)

Now, for some reason, people seem to believe that the more biological the causation, the less volitional the behavior. They further believe that the degree of volition determines normal or abnormal status, and

RIGHT DATA

Some Junk

ONLY A FEW years after they were allegedly discredited as a "Ponzi scheme" supported by the machinations of Michael Milken and Drexel Burnham, "junk" bonds are again in vogue. Investors are clamoring for high-yield corporate debt as an alternative to the rock-bottom interest rates currently paid by CDs and passbook accounts. In 1992, two years after Drexel's demise, a record $40 billion worth of new junk-bond issues were brought to market.

JUNK BOND RENAISSANCE

	Number of New Issues	Principal Amount (Billions)	Junk as % All New Corp. Debt	Default Rate
1980	45	$ 1.4	3.9%	1.5%
1985	175	15.7	19.5	1.7
1986	226	33.3	21.3	3.5
1987	190	30.5	24.2	5.8
1988	160	31.1	23.1	2.7
1989	130	28.8	20.1	4.3
1990	10	1.4	1.3	10.1
1991	48	10.0	4.8	10.3
1992	245	39.8	12.5	3.4

Source: Merrill Lynch

How have investors fared with juk bonds? For the period 1980 through 1992 the Merrill Lynch High Yield Index averaged a 13.7 per cent annual rate of return, outperforming intermediate Treasuries (12.3 per cent). The higher yield, of course, is necessary to compensate investors for the higher risks associated with these securities. Indeed, junk-bond defaults hit a record $18.9 billion (10.3 per cent of all outstanding principal) in 1991, as federal regulators forced S&Ls and insurers to dump their junk-bond portfolios. Yet despite continued congressional overkill, default rates fell by two-thirds last year, to 3.4 per cent.

The relative riskiness of junk bonds is best measured by the "spread" between the yields of junk bonds and U.S. Treasury bonds with similar maturities. During the junk-bond debacle of 1990 and 1991 the spread was as much as 11 percentage points; in June of this year it was only 4 percentage points.

The politically inspired vendetta against junk bonds and their purveyors has obscured their considerable economic merits. Corporate restructurings usually produce smaller, less diversified, and more efficient corporations. When managers become owners, their self-interest suddenly shifts from building wasteful corporate empires to maximizing company profits. Harvard Professor Michael Jensen, in a recent article in the *Journal of Applied Corporate Finance*, estimates that stockholders gained $650 billion as a result of takeovers, mergers, LBOs, and divestitures over the period 1976 to 1990. This figure represents gains to the "sellers," or owners of the acquired company, in such transactions; it omits the allegedly "obscene" profits accruing to the "buyers"—corporate raiders.

Critics warned that higher interest costs would force highly leveraged companies to lay off workers. Research shows that although there was a loss of jobs among top management and corporate staff, the overall job growth in restructured companies was six times higher than industry averages during the 1980s. We were also told that junk-bond interest would crowd out R&D spending. In fact, real R&D expenditures reached new highs in each year of the 1975 to 1990 period.

Unfortunately, the recent surge in junk-bond issuance may not portend more economically beneficial restructurings. Federal regulations now restrict banks from funding such transactions, and state anti-takeover laws have significantly decreased the chances of successful hostile takeovers and thus the chances of a more enterprising U.S. economy. The new bonds are simply being used to refinance existing bonds at generally lower rates of interest.

—ED RUBENSTEIN

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moral status. These beliefs are for the most part false.

Biological impulses often leave more room for volition than do environmentally caused impulses. For example, the effects of childhood brutalization can restrict one's freedom far more than does a physiological preference for sweets; and many purely biological impulses pale in strength before the smoker's need of a cigarette.

Neither cause nor degree of volition determines the psychological (as opposed to the statistical) normality or abnormality of behavior. Mongoloidism is clearly abnormal, but red hair is not. A desire to eat cocker spaniel is (in our society) a sign of psychological abnormality that is probably environmentally caused, but a desire to eat steak is not abnormal. Child molestation is immoral even if, as some have suggested, biology plays a significant role in generating the impulse that drives it.

Any argument for social discouragement of homosexuality must be predicated on the view that it is harmful to society or to the homosexual himself. If the latter, harmful not merely in a tautological sense, but in the sense that the pathologies with which it is associated (suicide, depression, compulsive sexual need, and developmental stagnation at the adolescent level) inhere in the development of the homosexuality itself, and are not merely the result of social ostracism.

The current fashion, of course, dictates the acceptance of claims that homosexuality is merely "an alternative lifestyle" that is harmful to neither society nor the individual. But none of all the thousands of societies known to have existed on earth has ever accepted an adult male's playing a passive homosexual role. And the vast majority of societies have condemned homosexuality of any kind. It's possible that we know more than the Inuits and the Japanese and the Bambuti Pygmies and the Jivaro and the Elizabethan English and our own grandparents, but it is far from obvious that this is the case. And it is not a matter that will be settled either way by the discovery of a wayward gene.

Our Enemy's Enemy

IN THE last issue, we deplored the House vote that cut off all FY 1994 funding for the National Endowment for Democracy. The Endowment is part of Ronald Reagan's legacy, an institution by which the American people can "foster the infrastructure of democracy"—the system of free political parties, anti-Communist labor unions, democratic press, and free enterprise. In Yugoslavia, in Cuba, in China, in Burma, in the Arab world, indeed in much of the Third World, the NED supports human-rights groups and others resisting dictatorship or building free institutions. This is a function that the U.S. Government cannot perform directly, but an intermediary institution like the NED—working through the Democratic and Republican Parties, the AFL-CIO, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce—can do it with hands-on expertise.

The main thrust of the attack on the NED comes not from champions of budgetary frugality but from our old friends on the Hard Left. *The Nation* is in the forefront of the assault. For the last year and a half, a group called the Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource, which won its spurs defending the Sandinistas and their radical-Left allies in Central America, has published a bimonthly bulletin called the *NED Backgrounder*. Funded by the J. Roderick MacArthur Foundation, the *NED Backgrounder* has attempted to discredit the NED as a "dangerous" instrument of U.S. neo-colonialism and capitalism, etc., etc. The folks at the Resource Center (Noam Chomsky et al.) are particularly incensed at the NED's efforts against the Castro dictatorship.

The issue, then, is whether, despite the paranoid Left, the American body politic still cares enough about its core beliefs to continue to promote them abroad. On this one, the Clinton Administration is doing the right thing.

Bottoms Up!

REGULAR drinking is good for you—aids the digestion as well as raising the spirits. This is commonplace folk wisdom in Britain, France, Poland, Japan, Nicaragua, Antigua, and Australia—indeed, in most places in the world except America. So it was pleasing to see the American Council on Science and Health this month finally endorse moderate drinking by publishing a pamphlet, by R. Curtis Ellison of the Boston University School of Medicine, that says: "The scientific evidence is now clear. Moderate alcohol use can extend life."

The Whirling Dervish

Spinning past the potted palms
With a speed that triggered qualms
In the staff, his apogee
Spun beyond the DMZ
As, with doctoring not seen
Since he dressed for Halloween,
Mr. Gergen's spinning gave
Both the Clintons what they crave.

W. H. VON DREELE

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An introduction to this booklet says some of the Council's peer reviewers were reluctant to be seen endorsing alcohol, and the paper stresses the dangers of immoderation. But the demand for abstinence from alcohol is immoderation too. For studies here and in other countries are utterly consistent in showing that moderate drinkers live healthier and longer lives than teetotalers.

Moderate regular intake of alcohol reduces the incidence of heart attacks, strokes, and other forms of circulatory disease, and might reduce the incidence of certain cancers. Overall risk of death is related to drinking by a J-shaped curve in which mortality rates decline in the range of 10 to 30 per cent for moderate drinkers as compared to abstainers. Admittedly, past an average of six drinks per day the mortality rate increases considerably.

But be of good cheer. One study suggests that the benefits of booze increase with age. Indeed over age 65, not only does moderate drinking prolong life, but so does heavy drinking! The moderate drinkers have a 40 per cent lower mortality rate than the abstainers, and even the heavy drinkers have a 12 per cent lower mortality rate. If you have ever wondered how to cope with ageing, here's how.

Henry Hazlitt, R I P

THERE are many problems in growing old, and Henry Hazlitt faced all of them. When I last saw him, we walked together from my house to the car in which I would return him to the retirement home he occupied with his stricken wife. "When," he asked, "was this house built?"

"In 1907," I said.

"Oh!" he commented. "That was the year I graduated from high school!" He would live on and on, but the tactile sense of Harry Hazlitt had ended. We knew he was alive—somewhere.

And he was the most punctilious man, who never let any courtesy go by him unremarked, or unappreciated. But gradually the letters stopped, ended. I had attended his 70th birthday party, his 75th, his 80th. Too embarrassed to submit to yet another formal celebration, he had in just a few friends for an 85th birthday lunch. If he had been in the mood for it, he could have had a 90th and a 95th. The day before he died, I learned that he had suffered the amputation of a leg. It is not good to go on for so long.

Henry Hazlitt was a journalist-scholar of formidable dimensions. I knew him first when he served as co-editor of *The Freeman* with John Chamberlain and Forrest Davis. He was widely known and highly regarded. He had served as an editorial writer for the *New York Times*, back when free-marketeers were tolerated there. He had written for *The Nation* and edited the *Mercury*. He had written the classic *Economics in One Lesson*, causing H. L. Mencken to remark that Hazlitt was one of the few economists who could write splendid English. In the future, after the dissolution of *The Freeman* (it became a publication of the Foundation for Economic Education), he would be a columnist for *Newsweek* magazine, and the author of numerous works of economic and philosophical analysis, and also here and there a work of fiction. He undertook the massive, and massively unappreciated, task of deciphering John Maynard Keynes, sentence by sentence, concluding that much that had been written by him in the *General Theory* was simply inscrutable, and much of it contradictory. For two decades he was the closest associate of Ludwig von Mises, the dean of the Austrian School. And, toward the end, he did tours of duty with the Foundation for Economic Education, which has his papers.

It isn't widely known that Henry Hazlitt liked enormously to laugh, and did so with undisguised pleasure. He was rather formal in his social manners and for that reason he could, in a large setting, go through an evening unnoticed. But always his mind was in high gear. One had the impression that he never forgot a word he read, nor came across a thought he didn't familiarize himself with. The sheer body of his prodigious work marks him as one of the most formidable students of libertarian thought of this century, and probably its foremost popularizer. It can't be said about a man who dies at 98 that he will be missed, because he has in fact been missed for nearly ten years. But he deserves the ongoing gratitude of all who learned from him, and who were touched by him. —WFB

NOTES & ASIDES

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

Anent the exchange of letters between the Rickenbackers: the problem with principles is the necessity of applying them consistently and rigorously. You cannot change the ruler because the amount of carpeting doesn't fit your floor space.

JR adds to his plea to his father an additional note: that the refusal of government benefits may put his children's finances at risk. This is beside the point. Being born is a gift: we have no "right" to be born. The manner of our coming into existence is through two persons. Without them, we would not exist, so our obligation is absolute. JR would not have a financial position to be endangered if he did not first have parents.

If social "security" taxes offend his basic principles, WFR should have taken a principled stand and refused to pay them. Going to jail in opposition to government actions is a long and honorable tradi-

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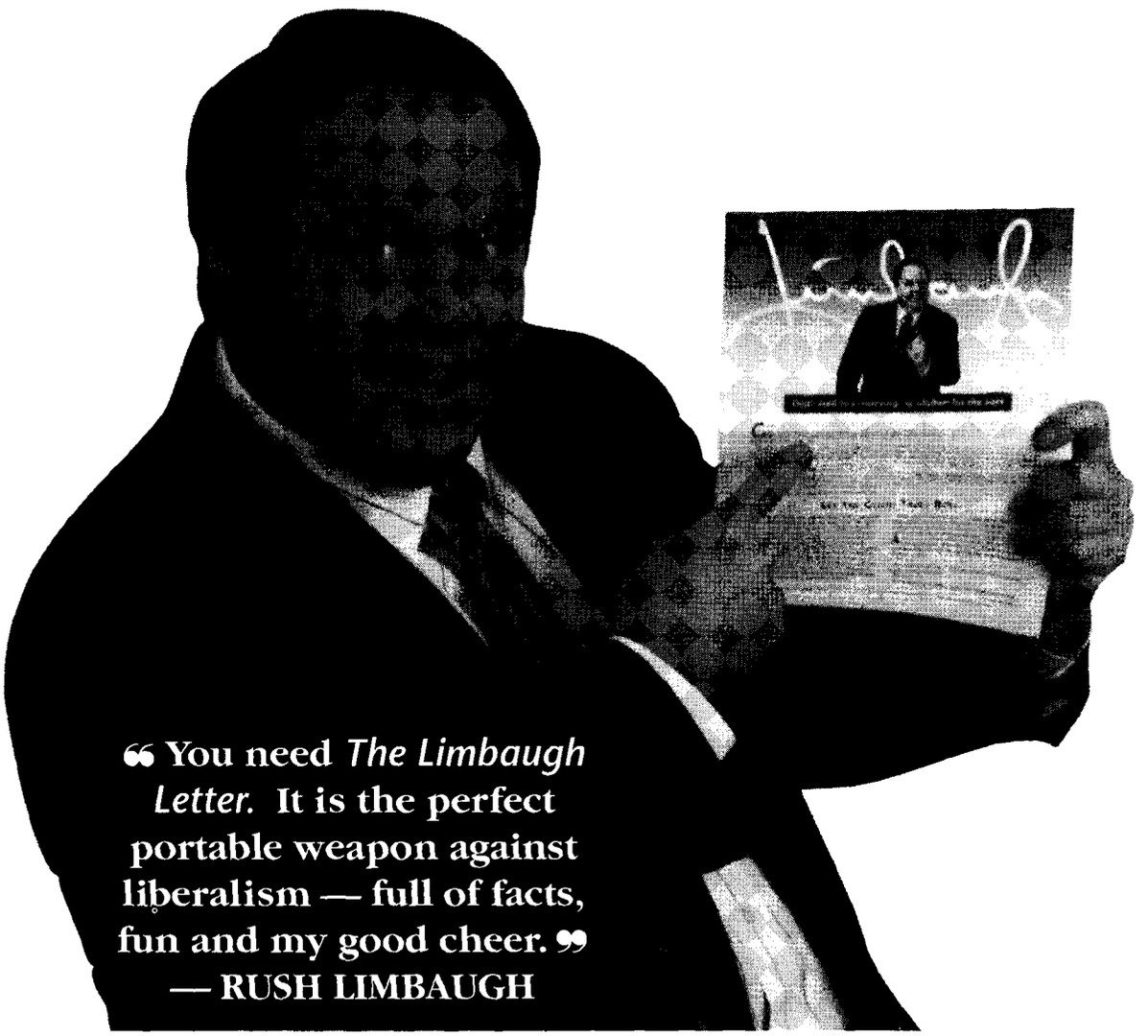
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"Maybe I prefer *doing it all wrong!"*

tion. In agreeing to pay, he also agreed to receive. Apart from his own feelings, he might consider the pressure that could be put upon others, situated closer to the margin than he apparently is. Like the siren songs of "the quality of life" that are increasingly being sung to nudge elderly infirm people over the edge, one can imagine the chorus of "Do you really need the money? You are old, Father William. Consider the example of WFR . . ."

The matter was pretty thoroughly discussed some time ago by the short, snub-nosed Socrates. You may try to change the rules of the government in the society in which you choose to live. But while the rules are in force, you must stick to them. Else everyone will feel justified in "adjusting" them, or forcing others to accept an adjustment. Accepting the payments maintains the agreement—the law. What someone does with the payments is his own affair. It is less unpleasant than accepting a cup of hemlock.

Sincerely yours,
Gabriel Austin
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Austin: You can say *that* again. On the other hand, that isn't really an alternative Mr. Rickenbacker faces, is it? Socrates (see Willmoore Kendall's *The Conservative Affirmation*) was ambushed by Socrates. Cordially, WFB

Dear Mr. Buckley:

Being an inveterate letter writer of conservative views, I found myself in lofty company after reading your exchange with Mr. Rickenbacker re: Social Security checks and the morality of accepting same while damning the program.

Your compromise advice to "accept your Social Security until you have been repaid, with compound interest, the total you have paid out: and disdain it thereafter," is exactly what I proposed in letters (enclosed) to my congressman and senators in March of this year. I suggested that retirees of means be given the opportunity to withdraw all of their personal contributions, plus interest, in a lump sum, leaving the employer contributions in the system to be drawn later by less fortunate retirees, thus helping to perpetuate the system. To date, the only response has come from Senator Dirk Kempthorne in the form of an "atta boy" letter.

I am delighted that you share my views. Perhaps you can energize conservative lawmakers to pursue this partial solution to Social Security reform.

Ken Smith
Ketchum, Idaho

Dear Mr. Smith: Never mind. When term limitations have got them all, you and I will have our go, and fix up Social Security, just to begin with. Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

I'm writing to you because I am perplexed as to why I find you such an intriguing, thought-provoking public figure. I am a 25-year-old Caucasian male of modest means, a copywriter for Car-Freshner Corporation (makers of the world famous "Little Trees" air fresheners).

As a result of my admiration for you and your writing, I feel as if I am terribly out of place as I know of no one who shares this interest with me. None of my close friends or members of my family (with the exception of my hopelessly liberal inamorata) would ever be accidentally mistaken for an intellectual or academician. As a consequence of these associations, I unfortunately was not brought up in an intellectually challenging environment. Hence, carrying on a conversation concerning my favorite author and his newest newspaper column or book is nearly impossible. Therefore, I have felt compelled to communicate this annoyance to you, not really sure what to expect from you in return. Be merciful.

Best regards,
Kenneth J. Yott
Watertown, N.Y.

P.S. Tell me, sir: a) How is it possible that your cosmopolitan lifestyle interests a poor, rural soul like me? and b) Have you ever visited or sailed the Lake Ontario region near the lovely 1,000 Islands (i.e. in my neck of the woods)?

Dear Mr. Yott: Thank you for sending me a Car-Freshner, which I'll try out this very day. I'm sorry that no one in your circle shares your interests. Why don't you try reading NATIONAL REVIEW aloud to your girlfriend and see if you can detox her? . . . You must not feel too depressed at being a poor, rural soul like Abraham Lincoln, and finally, yes indeed I have sailed, however briefly, in the 1,000 Islands, and congratulate you on them. Cordially, **—WFB**

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ON THE SCENE

No Tidal Wave

DONALD KIRK

Bonnie Gardner

TOKYO

FOR once the Japanese seemed to have a choice. "The people are sick of scandals," Tsutomu Hata shouted at a square near a busy station, his face alternating between anger and genial good humor. "I will listen to the voters of Japan." A few stops around the Yamanote Line, the railroad that encircles the capital, Morihiro Hosokawa had much the same message. "Many people think politics is just dirty stuff," he said. "We would like to restore the belief of the people in politicians."

The messages from the leaders of two of the three new breakaway parties here appealed to the mood of an electorate increasingly restive with *yuchaku-kozo*—roughly, "sticky adherence to the structure." For 38 years the Liberal–Democratic Party—often described as neither liberal nor democratic—had dominated the lower house of the Diet. For all that time the party had maintained enough discipline for its lower-house majority automatically to elect the LDP president as prime minister. Now the rules had changed. Hata, enough of an LDP loyalist to get himself appointed as finance minister, and Hosokawa, a two-term governor of a key prefecture, had moved outside the party, joining with other LDP foes in June to force a vote of no-confidence in the government of Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa—and, a month later, on a rainy July 18, lower-house elections that seemed to portend real "restructuring."

The greatest lesson of the elections, however, may have been a reaffirmation of Japanese conservatism and continuity. If the LDP did not win a majority, it still remains by far the strongest party in the Diet. As Ken Courtis of Deutsche Capital Markets, one of the most experienced foreign analysts here, put it to me while Hata's voice was still reverberating around the square, "Old wine is being poured into new bottles." A new ruling party might indeed emerge, but the "iron triangle" of anonymous bureaucrats and businessmen in league with headline-grabbing politicians will be tighter than ever.

For the Japanese, the campaign that had seemed to promise so much had long since devolved into another tedious spectacle. Newspapers relegated campaign speeches to secondary display, especially in the final week when the deadly earthquake and tsunami off Hokkaido grabbed all the headlines. Prime Minister Miyazawa, living down accusations of weakness in the aftermath of the bribery scandals, eagerly appeared on television consoling victims' families and promising aid—right after President Clinton had done the same at the crest of the Mississippi Flood. The chance to project a new, unfamiliar image could not have been more propitious.

Yet another factor was the commingling of fatalism and inertia. Ensei Kanke, a political writer for *Asahi Shimbun*, Japan's most prestigious newspaper, summarized the choice that confronted the electorate. "The voters seem to be feeling that the election is a choice of two evils anyway," Kanke wrote before the vote: "the continuation of corrupt politics by the rule of the LDP or political confusion under a government of an unprincipled coalition of the anti-LDP parties."

The irony is that Japan may get more of both. The LDP, winding up just four seats fewer than it held after the defections in June, still dreamed of cobbling together a government through alliances elsewhere in the political spectrum. Young and old, idealists and cynics, agreed with experienced foreign observers. "There will be nothing new," art student Yoko Hayashi, blissfully unaware of the names of the new parties' leaders, told me. Or, as Toyoda Motor Chairman Shoichiro Toyoda later put it in more stylized language, the election results "showed the people's desire for the stabilization of politics and the continuation of basic policies."

From the viewpoint of the "iron triangle," however, the turmoil came as an overdue housecleaning. Hosokawa, who had founded his New Japan Party last year, certainly does not seem to have been cast in the same mold as Hata. Now in control of an entirely new bloc of 48 seats in the lower house, Hosokawa seems serious about political reform. Hata too talks incessantly of reform. No one, however, forgets that Hata did not form his Renewal Party until he lost out in a battle for the LDP faction once dominated by aging kingpin Shin Kanemaru, under indictment for embezzlement.

Between them, even if they oppose each other, Hosokawa and Hata may bring about some semblance of change—perhaps an end to the more blatant forms of payoffs. The process, moreover, reflects a long overdue shift from rural to urban political influence—with reapportionment likely to weaken the LDP's rural backbone even more in the next few years. The process also reflects a generational shift—Hosokawa and Hata are in their fifties, young by standards of an LDP gerontocracy that equates age with wisdom in true Confucian style.

What the political turmoil is not

Mr. Kirk is a veteran foreign correspondent.

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about, however, is a difference in overall outlook. "It is quite impossible to predict a change in policy," Takeshi Sasaki, a Tokyo University political scientist, assured me. He saw the underlying desire of the Japanese electorate for "stability"—one of the LDP's great catchwords—as overwhelmingly important. "The economic situation is good now," with an unemployment rate of only 2.5 per cent and a GNP that persists in growing amid alarmist reports of slowdowns and shutdowns. "People do not think we have a lot of alternatives."

The most obvious proof of the national ideology lay in the failure of the Socialists, by far the greatest losers in the elections. They managed to retain only 70 of the 135 seats they held beforehand. Their failure stripped the electorate of a real ideological alternative.

Thus officials in Washington only delude themselves if they believe that the process will produce a leader any more amenable to yielding on trade talks. For one thing, Hata as finance minister was as tough as anyone in negotiations. For another, for any would-be leader to betray weakness in dealing with foreigners would, in this society, be instant suicide—the more so in the aftermath of the palpably phony market-opening "agreement" cooked up between Miyazawa and President Clinton's camp after the Tokyo summit. (The agreement cost Miyazawa no votes since the Japanese were well aware of its significance as a meaningless courtesy gesture extended to the visitor.)

If the Japanese did not anticipate much real change, however, there was still a certain excitement, a feeling of watching an intriguing *ningyo-joruri* or puppet theater. "Everything is changing," said suburban housewife Akiko Suzuki, "but no one knows how." There was no doubt, as *Asahi Shimbun* told her, that she had watched "an historical election"—though its real place in history might not be clear until the politicos had made their compromises and trade-offs in the backrooms of Akasaka, far removed from prying media eyes, much less the whims of voters who would respect authority, whatever authority happened to rule them. □

Continent Not Cut Off

LINDA BRIDGES

PHILADELPHIA

THE TOPIC of this year's Philadelphia Society meeting, "Europe and America," might be read as meaning "EC and U.S."; and three lively sessions dealt with just that. But the economy cannot be separated from the broader culture, and before the weekend was over talk had turned to matters such as how dead white European males are received on American campuses; how Germany has supplanted Sweden in the American Left's affections; and whether the seeds of America's decadence were planted in the very Founding, a stone's throw away from where we were meeting. (Indeed, there was something disturbingly non-traditional about the choice of Philadelphia

Miss Bridges is NR*'s managing editor.*

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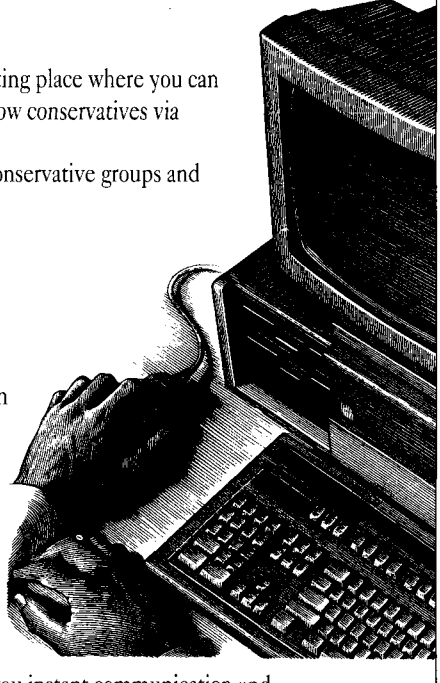

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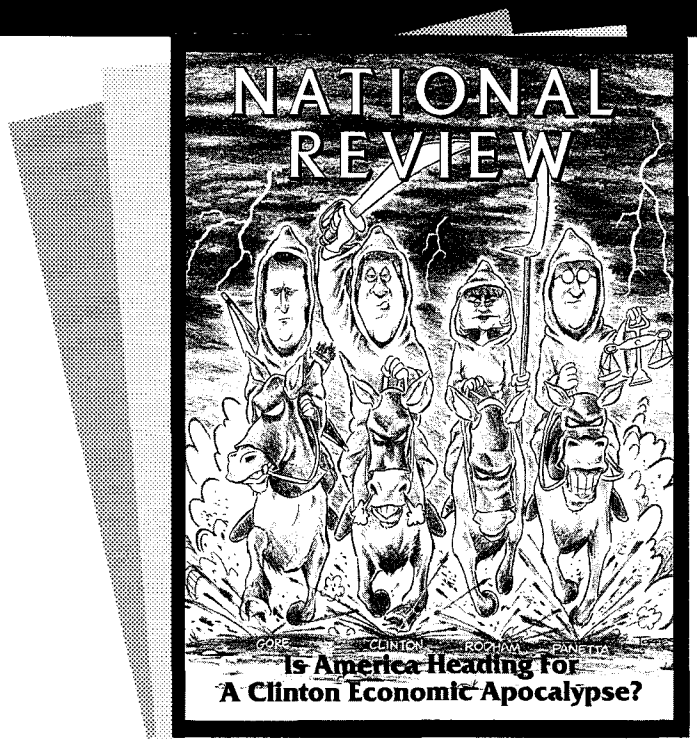

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as a venue. Classic Philly Soc joke: "Why is it called the Philadelphia Society?" "Because it always meets in Chicago.")

The ebullient Sir Rhodes Boyson, MP—looking like a Trollopean parliamentarian with his mutton-chop whiskers—led off by diagnosing the difficulty Americans have in seeing the problems with a United States of Europe. After all, if it worked for us, why shouldn't it work for them? But there are two overwhelming differences. First, the countries of Europe are "widely divergent" in history, politics, and temperament. Second, in our Founding "power was passed up from the people" to the new government; in Maastricht, government power is being increased by the governments themselves. A prime illustration of both is the clashing legal systems. English common law developed through history case by case; Napoleonic statute law was created by a central government: "I prefer ours; they have every right to prefer theirs; but I do not want statute law imposed from Brussels."

Sir Rhodes's American audience was also nervously awaiting an attempt to impose power—not from Brussels, but from the new Clinton Administration. The hallways and the barrooms were full of can-you-imagine?s (from a proud Virginia lady: "*Can you imagine* a President who doesn't respect the military?"). But conversation also turned to the death of Mel Bradford. He was remembered movingly by Forrest McDonald at the Saturday breakfast meeting. Professor Bradford's prodigious memory, his relish for courtly but spirited debate, his knowledge of esoteric points of history far from his own specialty—this was all good to hear, but no surprise. The surprise was that what Mel Bradford had really wanted to be was a Wagnerian baritone. Herbert von Karajan's loss was Harry Jaffa's gain.

Speaking of spirited debate, the next panel resonated with the passions aroused by Euromeddling. Nigel Ashford, a professor at Staffordshire University, argued that while "Euroskeptics" have a point, they forfeit their standing to modify the form of a New Europe if they reject the whole process. Linda Whetstone, a trustee of various foundations but also a working farmer, is more than a Euroskeptic: there are times, especially when affixing passports to her steers, when it seems she would not mind seeing the Continent well and truly cut off. (Farm products, you see, get different subsidies in different locales, so an account of the subsidies each animal, fruit, or vegetable has received has to travel with it.) Mrs. Whetstone strongly favors free trade ("When goods are prohibited from crossing national borders, armies will"), but opposes Britain's coming under EC—which is to say French—rule. Mr. Ashford agreed that the aim of a European Community should be freedom, not increased regulation, and he got a big laugh by saying seriously that an essential guarantee was "the right of

Robert Prince

secession." ("That must be the Southern contingent in your group.")

But Europe doesn't end at the Elbe. If the problems in Western Europe seem to hinge on different agricultural policies deeply rooted in the histories of France and England, the current problems in Central and Eastern Europe seem to hinge on which men will be chosen to implement new policies. I recalled that when Daniel Oliver, who chaired the next panel, was nominated as General Counsel to the Agriculture Department, a Midwestern senator asked him whether he could even tell wheat from oats. No, said Mr. Oliver, "but I can tell wheat from chaff." That's the sort of expertise our policymakers need if we're to help Eastern Europe.

In the view of Jeffrey Gayner, the Heritage Foundation's man in Moscow, about all we can practically do at this stage is support people who favor policies that would lead to free markets. We should also be encouraging the EC to go "broad rather than deep," but there isn't much hope—at least in the short term—that it will consider any of the former Soviet republics for membership: "They find it inconvenient, if not unacceptable, that Russia shares their continent."

As John Fund sees it, the wrong people are trying to be helpful. He recalled the original "Ugly American"—the guy in Bermuda shorts wandering through Europe's cathedrals wondering why nobody here speaks English. Well, the new Ugly Americans are the ones going over to explain "how to cure socialism with socialism." He cited the dismay of Anatoly Chubais, Russia's Minister of Privatization, at seeing Marxist American professors going on Russian TV to tell people that privatization can't work.

Indeed, as Michael Novak pointed out in his luncheon speech, it is one of the great ironies that our professoriate has become so heavily leftist, and our new President is looking to Germany as a social and economic model, just as people from Peking to Prague are proclaiming their desire to follow our (older) example.

In Mr. Novak's view, while the first Americans were "the children of Europe," to see what was so right about our country for so long, we need only look at what made the youthful America different from Europe in principle as well as in practice—its "marks of originality." First, "ordered liberty," which has nothing to do with "the liberty of 42nd Street." Second, the perception enshrined in the words "Congress shall make no law": the Founders recognized that government is "simply incompetent in certain matters of the human spirit." Our decline can be correlated directly to the increase in the number of laws passed each year. Third, the "law of associations." What in France people would turn to the state to do, and in England to the aristocracy, in America they turned to themselves to do. It is this spirit that the modern American government has worked so hard to undermine. (I have heard people who are active in private charity talk of their being "forced" to take over what are "properly the tasks of government"—e.g., helping the unfortunate.) Finally, "the spirit of enterprise." But how many decades of welfare and over-regulation can it stand?

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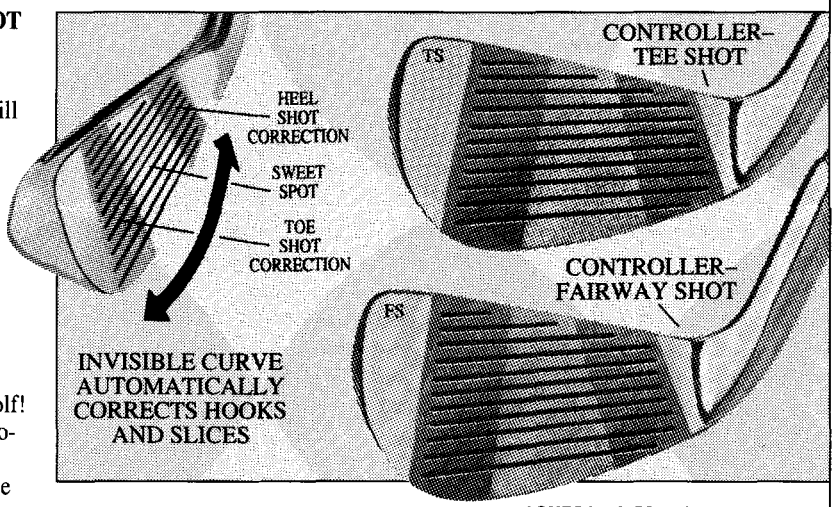

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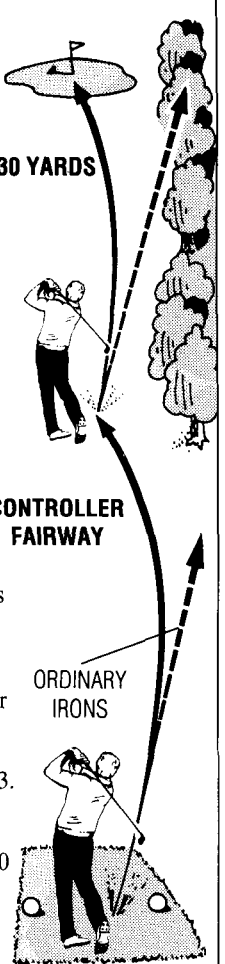

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One point that emerged clearly from Mr. Novak's analysis was the inseparability of political, economic, and what are more commonly called "cultural" factors, and this was the focus of the rest of the meeting. To be sure, almost an infinite number of things can be considered under the heading of culture; as John O'Sullivan put it, "When I hear the word 'culture,' I reach for my thesaurus."

Are the European cultures faring any better than ours? Margo Carlisle told of asking the editor of *Le Figaro* whether he wasn't afraid of losing readers to cable TV news. No, he said—most people don't get cable, and those that do are at dinner parties instead. It would be reassuring to think that kind of *haut bourgeois* imperviousness to modern trends was typical, but in France as elsewhere in the Western world, the high culture has mostly degenerated into Derridism, while the mass culture is the worst of what America has to offer—Madonna and Michael Jackson and "tepid Kentucky Fried Chicken," in Allan Carlson's phrase. And, as Claes Ryn acerbically pointed out, conservatives duly complain about the increasing debauchery of that popular culture, but they have not devoted much practical energy to changing it.

Now even that unpalatable status quo is being challenged by something nastier. As Allan Carlson put it, the "responsible Europeanism" of Maastricht and AIDS benefits is giving way to new, violent nationalisms. What is happening in the former Yugoslavia is "alien to a world mediated by MTV and CNN"; and even France's turn away from Socialism is, to the extent that it is a turn toward Le Pen, a mixed blessing. Only here and there in Europe (perhaps the Lega Lombarda in Italy; definitely the Civic Democratic Party in the Czech Republic) do we find what John O'Sullivan listed as the imperatives of the American conservative political culture: "a strong but decent patriotic sentiment"; a belief in the free market; and a "traditional morality that shapes citizens capable of living independently in a democratic society."

But how are we raising the next generation of citizens? To ask the question is to invite a flood of horror stories from the academy. But Carol Iannone, a battle-scarred veteran of those wars, illustrated that the problem is not just with the universities—it is throughout the culture that children absorb before they ever reach a college campus. Miss Iannone has found that within just two decades, things that were taken for granted no longer are. You used to be able, for example, to point to Nazism as indisputably evil: but now, if the question arises, Did World War II have to be fought? a student is as likely to reply: "Well, I suppose if you were Jewish it had to be fought."

Now, as Jeffrey Wallin pointed out, questioning our own tradition is at the very base of that tradition: Aristotle in the Nichomachean Ethics asked: How can we *know* what is right? But one has to say that the relativism of Miss Iannone's student doesn't strike one as an agonized search for truth.

The group had expected a call to arms later in the evening, when Pat Buchanan would address the Young America's Foundation, but we did not have to wait till after dinner. The title of this last session was: "European History and Literature: America's Heritage or Burden?" and John Lukacs took it head on: "My dear friends, what do you *mean* by this? That Macchu Pichu is a wonder greater than Chartres? That Gabriel García Márquez beats Shakespeare? . . . My dear friends, that is the trouble with you conservatives. It is not only a rhetorical question, it is a false one." We are, he went on, in the middle of a cultural—and political, and economic—catastrophe, and "the last thing we need is self-congratulation." Coming back to the stated topic, he concluded: "Yes, burden it is—a burden in the honest sense in which Rudyard Kipling coined the phrase exactly one hundred years ago."

The next morning those who got up in time for breakfast heard reports from the battlefront. Larry Arnn told of strolling to Independence Hall and seeing the portraits of the men who had founded our nation; he then walked up South Street, which seemed to be the condom center of North America: "It seems that the future of constitutional liberty has to be judged in the light of those two things." Grover Norquist was more cheerful, because even as Mr. Clinton was winning the election, voter initiatives dead contrary to his policies were winning in state after state. "It is easy to get new leaders; it would be hard to get a new American public." But as Heather Richardson pointed out, while our issues are good ones, we often frame them too coldly: "We're good at winning minds—now we have to start winning hearts." It was left to Ernest van den Haag to send us forth to do battle for a constitutional amendment the need for which must have James Madison spinning in his grave: "The Constitution has no penumbras." □

Crimea—The Next Bosnia?

DANIEL SNEIDER AND IGOR TORBAKOV

SEVASTOPOL

FOR nearly a quarter of a century, the Soviet navy's frigate SKR-112 patrolled the waters of the Black Sea from its base on the Crimean peninsula, protecting the socialist motherland from the imperialist enemy. Then in December 1991, the socialist motherland dissolved, and for independent Ukraine the imperialist threat was suddenly much closer at hand—just five hundred miles north, in Moscow. The newly formed Ukrainian Defense Ministry called upon the men of the former Soviet forces based on its territory to take an oath of allegiance to their new motherland.

The sailors of SKR-112 were among the first to answer the call, on January 26, 1992. The Black Sea Fleet command responded with a barrage of intimidation that finally drove SKR-112 to flee, Russian gunboats in pursuit, for the safety of Odessa. For the braided admirals of the Black Sea Fleet there still is only one "motherland"—the Soviet Union.

Some 18 months later, after three separate emergency negotiations between the presidents of Ukraine and Russia, the fleet is as much in dispute as ever. On June 17 Ukrainian Presi-

Mr. Sneider is the Moscow bureau chief of the Christian Science Monitor. *Mr. Torbakov is a research scholar at the Institute of Russian History at the Russian Academy of Sciences.*

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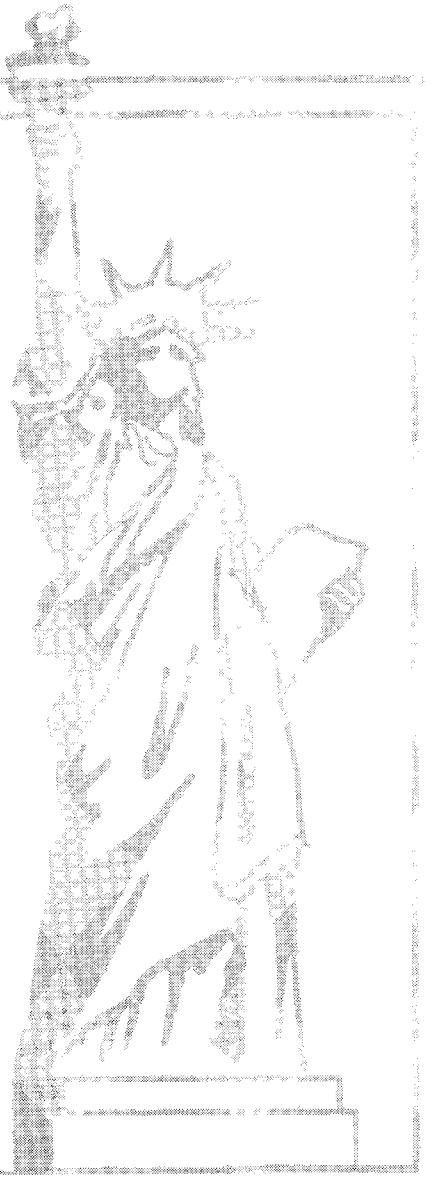

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dent Leonid Kravchuk and Russian President Boris Yeltsin agreed to split the 350-odd ships of the fleet fifty–fifty. Days later, on a visit to this port, the officers of the fleet openly disdained the agreement their commander-in-chief had signed.

Fleet spokesman Captain Andrei Grachev could barely contain his rage, pacing tensely as he talked: "For me, it is hard to see anything good in the agreement. . . . It is very hard to see how the Black Sea Fleet can be divided, a fleet that was created as a united military force. This agreement reduces the military and combat potential of the fleet to nil."

THE ATTENTION of the West, and of the United States in particular, has been focused on Ukraine's nuclear weapons. But among the many fault lines emerging from the collapse of the Soviet Empire, none is as fraught with the potential to start the next Yugoslavia as the Crimea and its fleet. The dispute is deeply rooted in history, symbolizing all of Ukraine's thwarted aspirations for national identity. But the West has been blinded to that history by years of seeing the Kremlin as our only interlocutor.

The current tensions overwhelm even the beauty of this peninsula's Mediterranean-like southern coast, where the marble dachas of Tsars and General Secretaries intermingle with the ruins of Greek temples and Genoese castles. Sitting in a café overlooking the sea at Yalta, young Russians who voted for Ukrainian independence in an October 1991 referendum now say they want to be part of Russia. Crimea—with a population that is two-thirds Russian, and linked only by a narrow land bridge to mainland Ukraine—is a prime candidate for secession.

The historic irony is that until the close of the eighteenth century, Crimea was neither Ukrainian nor Russian but Turkic, inhabited by Crimean Tatars and politically linked to the Ottoman Empire. Its incorporation into the Russian Empire was challenged as late as the Crimean War of 1854–56. Nearly a hundred years later, in 1944, Stalin was still nervous enough about the loyalties of the Tatars that he deported the entire population to Central Asia, whence they are still trying to return.

The current dispute evokes a powerful sense of déjà vu. After the October Revolution, there was briefly an independent Ukrainian republic. The Imperial Russian armed forces, including the Black Sea Fleet, began to split along national lines, and Leon Trotsky, People's Commissar of the Army and Navy, ordered the fleet's redeployment to the Russian port of Novorossisk, to keep it Russian.

For Ukraine, after three hundred years of Russian rule, the urgent task was to "return" to Europe and to assert a separate identity. As it is today, Crimea and the Black Sea were an essential part of that striving. "Historically, Ukraine was always looking to the West," asserted historian Mykhaiko Hrushevsky, the first president of the Ukrainian People's Republic, in the spring of 1918. "Geographically, she was looking and is looking to the south, to the Black Sea."

After Ukraine concluded a separate peace with the Central Powers, Germany placed Crimea under Ukrainian control. But once the Bolsheviks had defeated their foes in the Civil War, they ousted the Germans, overthrew the Ukrainian government, and then came up with their own solution for Crimea. Despite the rhetoric of "self-determination," the new Soviet Empire quickly incorporated Crimea in the new Russian Federation.

Robert Prince

Crimea remained part of Russia until 1954 when Nikita Khrushchev, the Ukrainian Communist whose years of slavish loyalty to Stalin brought him to power in the Kremlin, engineered its return to Ukrainian administration as a "celebration" of three hundred years of "Russian–Ukrainian unification."

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia and Ukraine picked up where they had left off more than seventy years before. Russian politicians have seized upon the issue. Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoi, now the standard-bearer of the "Red–Brown" coalition of Russian chauvinists and Communists, early on called for Crimea's "return" to Russia.

The response to the most recent agreement to divide the Fleet has revived all the territorial issues. The Russian-dominated Crimean legislature has rejected the deal. Supporting it, the hardline Russian parliament passed a resolution on July 9 opposing the treaty, which must be ratified by both parliaments. The resolution further asserted that Sevastopol was never included in the Crimean territory transferred to Ukraine in 1954 and therefore remains Russian federal territory.

After a rebuke from Yeltsin, the Fleet commander pledged his loyalty. But the command openly backs the Russian nationalists.

On board the vessels of the Fleet, Ukrainians and Russians serve together without visible hostility, but hot emotions lurk not far below the surface. Lieutenant-Captain Yuri Petrov, the engineering officer of SKR-112, recalls how, soon after SKR-112 had declared itself Ukrainian, then-Black Sea Fleet commander Igor Kasatonov visited the ship four times, surrounded by bodyguards. "He refused to have dinner here," says Petrov. "He said, 'I don't want to have dinner on this *knokhol* ship,'" using a Russian slur for Ukrainians.

Even though most of SKR-112's men were Ukrainian by nationality, the decision to swear allegiance to Ukraine was not based entirely on ethnic grounds. Petrov himself was born in Kazakhstan. "I live here, my family is here," he explains. "Personally I would like to stay in the USSR. But since the Soviet Union collapsed, I had to choose my second motherland."

That is a choice that men like Admiral Kasatonov so far refuse to make. They want the empire—be it Soviet or Russian—and cannot accept its end. Until they do, the world must act to ensure that the tide of another—and far more dangerous—Yugoslavia does not rise on these Black Sea shores. □

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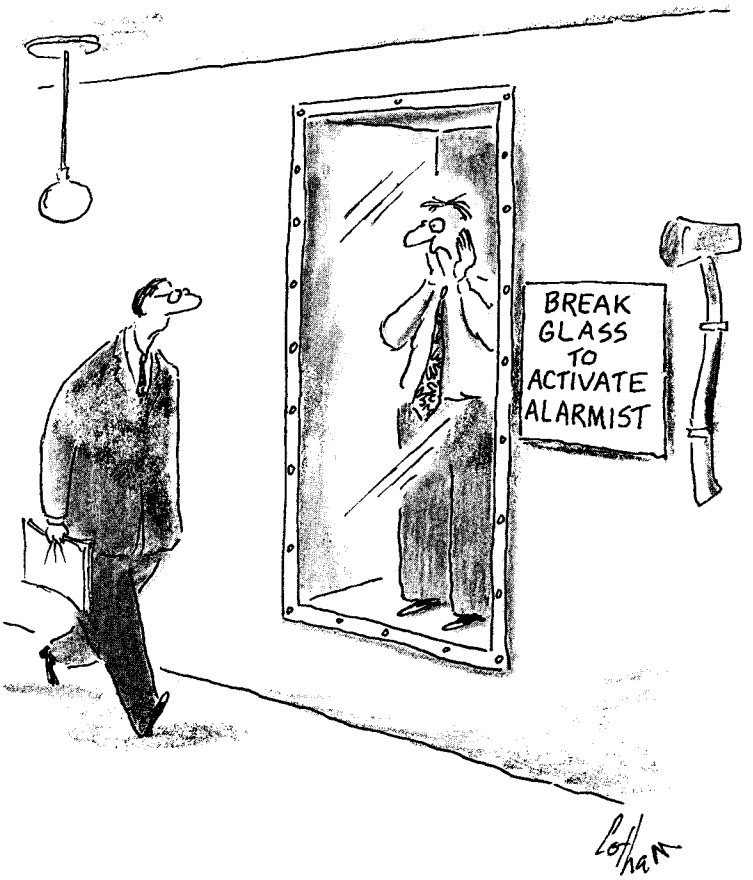
help

Glorobots

A robotical tenor named Scotti
About singing lovesongs was dotty,
    But he hadn't the glands
    That such singing demands
So he sang with a choir of castrati.

GLORIA A. MAXSON



"You're the first stuffy bureaucrat we've ever had to dinner."

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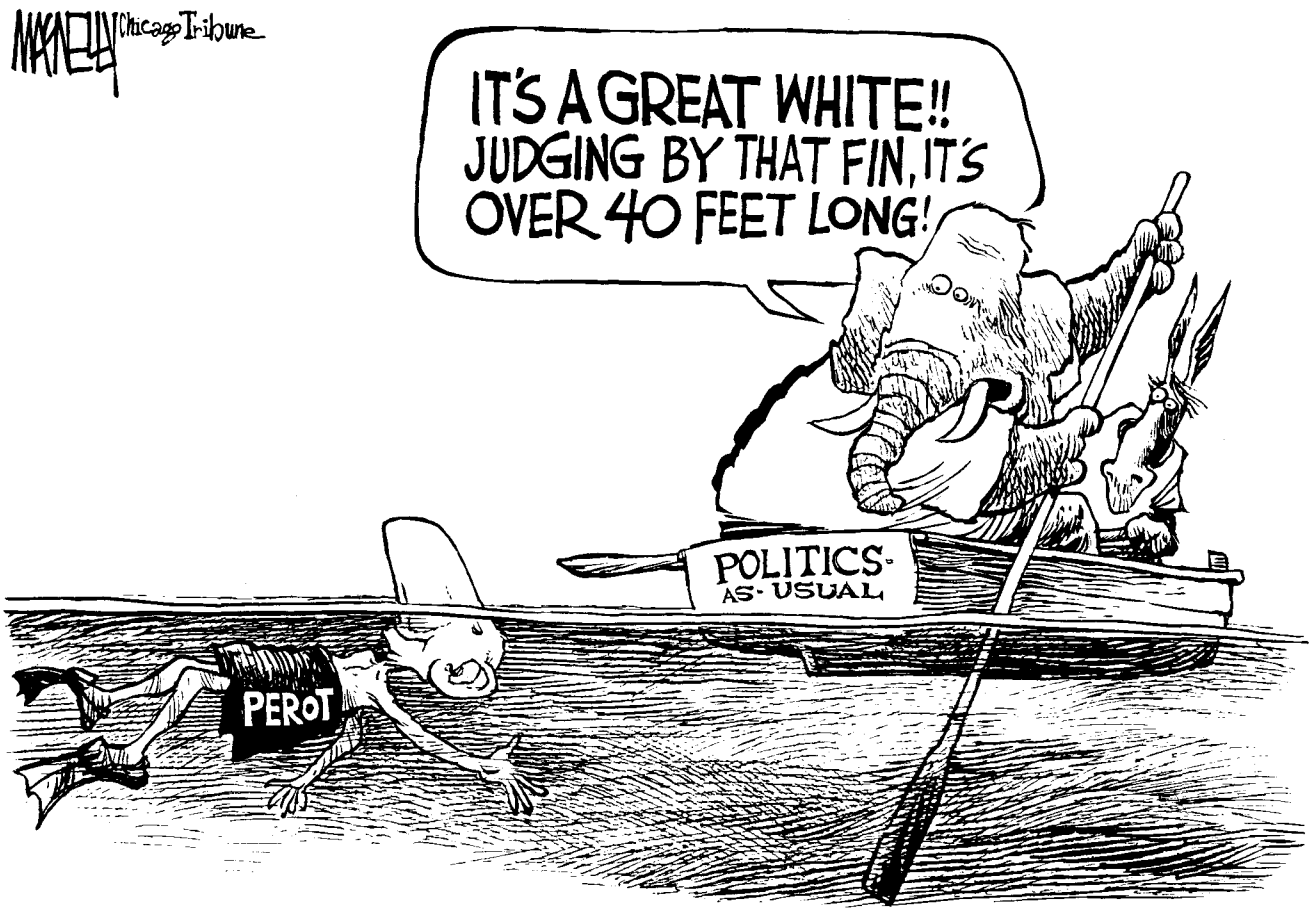
"YOU'RE LUCKY... ALL I GOT WAS A CLINTON CAMPAIGN PROMISE..."



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A VISIT TO LOURDES

TO BE A PILGRIM

Wm. F. Buckley Jr.

I WENT TO my doc and told him that for five days I hadn't done anything much except sleep, that I had even had to abort a long-planned weekend in Nassau with my wife. "I assume it's the same old thing," I said—my refractory sinuses punishing me, this time around, for spending 21 consecutive days on airplanes, flying here and there on the lecture circuit. He went through his customary motions, took maybe his 150th throat culture, and told me to come back the next day with a set of sinus X-rays, and I told him, No, that was not possible because I had to fly the next day, and he said I was positively not to fly until after he had seen the X-rays, and I said to him, Look, doc, I have to go to *Lourdes* tomorrow and I can't believe Our Lady would make me sick en route to Lourdes, that would make no sense. He said why didn't I leave one day later, and I told him that was not possible because I was flying non-stop as the guest of a friend with a private plane.

We struck a bargain: I would agree to submit to a big-deal MRI on the spot, ten blocks away; he would examine it and (presumably) tell me if one more flight would be lethal. Later that afternoon I heard from his assistant. Her exact words were, "The doctor said since you're going to go anyway, we may as well let you go."

So off I went, equipped with antibiotics and auxiliary medications. If you have an eye for piquancies, here is one—that the first two nights at Lourdes I slept consecutively not more than four hours. On night three I decided it was time for a shoot-out with whatever neurological hobgoblin was playing degenerative games with me, and so at bedtime I took not one tablet but *two*. From my experience with this drug I had long since concluded that this must have been the stuff they gave to Juliet, so effective is it. I reckoned that if the next morning I did not wake up at all, I would be left with a serious theological problem. But I slept the whole night through; and when I woke, prepared to resume the scheduled program of our pilgrimage, theological questions were on my mind anyway, indulging as I was not only the experience of a pilgrimage to Lourdes but a corollary curiosity about what exactly goes on there and what would be its impact on one first-time visitor.

A reason one doesn't hear so much about Lourdes these days (compared, say, to a generation or two ago) has to be that people don't really know what more there is to say. The inquirer whose mind turns for the first time to the subject begins by asking the questions one would expect, the first of which is of course, "Was there really an apparition?"

This translates to, "Did the little girl called Bernadette Soubirous actually *see* something? Or was what she reported no more than the product of an inflamed imagination?"

That question was first posed on February 11, 1858, to her family; whose reply was plainspoken: Bernadette's mother spanked her and put her to bed.

But there was something about the dogged sincerity in the 14-year-old's recounting of her experience that brought on a grudging acknowledgment—not that Bernadette had in fact come face to face with an apparition, but that *something* was going on worth investigating, even if it turned out to be nothing more than her mental health. Accordingly, three days later her mother gave permission to return. Back Bernadette went, to the little grotto alongside which, on Day One, Bernadette, a younger sister, and a friend had been foraging for firewood.

That was when Bernadette had suddenly stopped, immobilized for a full half-hour. When she came out of her trance she excitedly described the lady in white, with the blue eyes, the smile, and the blue belt-sash hanging down the front of her white robe.

On that second day at the grotto, once again in the company of her sister and their friend, she lost her composure while in communion with the apparition. The trance over, she opened her eyes and said that the lady in white had come and gone. But she could not rise, nor could her companions lift her up from the ground. They called on a neighboring miller for help. He handled her as a muscular aide would handle a heavyweight boxer who had been knocked insensate in the ring. Bernadette's family ruled that the phenomenon was ridiculous and profane and once again forbade her to return to the grotto. But of course she did. And her third visit, four days later, proved special because, for the first time, the lady in white spoke to her.

What had she said?

She had said that Bernadette should come back every afternoon for the next two weeks.

Bernadette did so. As one might expect, with each visit a larger number of villagers accompanied her, curious to

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witness the girl's catatonia and to hear from her own lips, after she came out of it, what it was that she had seen, and heard.

LOURDES was (and still is, really), a small town, situated in the northern foothills of the Pyrenees. Charlemagne is said to have fought over it, laying siege to its imposing fort in the eighth century, when the Moors occupied it. He struck a bargain with them: They would be permitted to survive the siege provided they converted to Christianity. In the years that followed, Lourdes, like the islands of the Antilles, became a musical chair: France had it, Spain had it, England had it. Permanent French occupation came only in the fifteenth century.

Lourdes withstood attacks during the religious wars, remaining stoutly Catholic, so that Bernadette's neighbors were indisputably French and indisputably Catholic: but notwithstanding the fabled Gallic skepticism, they were themselves hypnotized by the apparent transfiguration, before their own eyes, of the miller's oldest daughter. Whatever it was that was inducing those trances, the consensus gradually consolidated that they were not *self*-induced. For one thing there was nothing in the least theatrical in Bernadette's disposition, and certainly nothing in her background that would encourage anything of the sort. Her father was a casualty of the Industrial Revolution, well on the way to bankruptcy because technology had come up with more economical ways of making bread than grinding flour with roughly the same tools that had been used at the time of Christ. In the single room that made up the home of M. Soubirous, his wife, and their four children, histrionic episodes, one confidently deduces, were neither expected nor countenanced.

Bernadette was seeing 'something.' But whatever the chimera was, it was surely something other than the mother of Christ.

And then when Bernadette woke from her trances, her accounts were always direct and unambiguous. The lady in white usually did not speak to her, emitting only a smile. Seven times, during the 18 apparitions, she broke silence. On one occasion she called on Bernadette to relay her plea for repentance—hardly an irrelevant request, in the south of France in 1858, or for that matter in the north of France in 1958. Then came the second declaration: Bernadette was to pass on the word to the clergy—they must construct a chapel alongside the site at which the apparition was taking place. Next, she instructed Bernadette to dig in the earth a few feet away. She did so, and soon a stream of water sprang out. It continues, 135 years later, to flow, at a rate of up to 1,400 gallons per hour; water from the Pyrenees mountains that empties into the river Gave, and fills the thousands of receptacles in which it is collected by pilgrims. It is this water that fills the baths in which over one million pilgrims have immersed their bodies, their motive to experience a cure for an infirmity, or else merely to perform a devotional act, even as, in the secular world, a line might form to kiss the emperor's ring or curtsy to the queen.

The elders of Lourdes were now prepared to acknowledge that Bernadette was seeing "something." But they were resolute in disbelieving that the lady in white was the madonna: whatever the chimera was, it was surely something other than the mother of Christ. The parish priest, a hardy skeptic during the entire fortnight, said repeatedly to Bernadette that she must ask the apparition to give herself a name: Who was she?

The priest's request was compliantly transmitted, but the lady only smiled in response—until the 16th apparition. This time the lady in white answered Bernadette. She said, "I am the Immaculate Conception." Bernadette dutifully reported these words to the priest and the general company. The reaction was electric: the lady in white had declared herself to be the Blessed Virgin, the mother of Christ. The awe increased when Bernadette was closely questioned, and it transpired that she a) had never before heard the term, "Immaculate Conception," and b) had no idea what it meant or to whom it referred.

WHAT FOLLOWED was the usual sluggish reaction to any extraordinary event (Thomas Edison brought on no headlines when he announced that he had harnessed electricity). But the First Stage was now complete. No one associated with her any longer doubted that Bernadette—who went on to a novitiate in a nearby nunnery, where she died early from tuberculosis and the asthma she had contracted before the apparition—had truthfully described what she had seen and reported what she had heard.

In due course the chapel she had been instructed to propose was realized: the basilica is very large, its satellites numerous. The lady in white had given no intimation that the little spring she had brought to life would have therapeutic effects on many who touched it or were touched by it, but in fact it did. And even when her story had become nationally and internationally accepted, well before her death in 1879 at age 35, few gave any thought to the canonization of Bernadette Soubirous (this happened in 1933). Certainly no one had any idea that one hundred years later several million people every year would travel to Lourdes to see the grotto where the lady in white appeared, to feel the waters that continue to flow from the spring she unearthed, and to return from their visit to Lourdes substantially—in many cases, critically—affected by the experience. It is a matter of record that there are cases of the lame and the halt who have returned whole from Lourdes, and for every one of them there are tens of thousands who return affected in other ways.

ODDLY, English-speaking visitors cannot find Lourdes literature other than photographic books with slender textual matter. The French, yes—their Lourdes library is copious. But even the cosmopolitan bookstores don't carry copies of *The Miracle of Lourdes*, written 38 years ago by Ruth Cranston, and more or less updated in 1986. It is a useful volume, by a Protestant who became a devotee of Lourdes. The book is valuable primarily for its inclusion of basic data about the shrine. It records in considerable detail, for instance, a dozen of the cures attributed to Lourdes.

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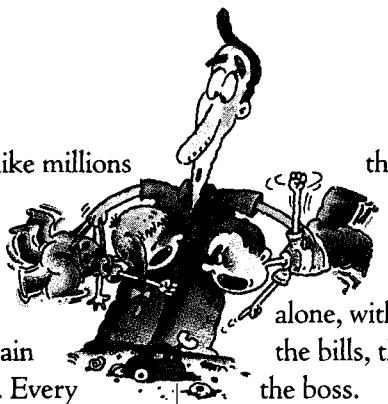
As heard on the Rush Limbaugh Program.

"After a tough day we head straight for our favorite watering hole."



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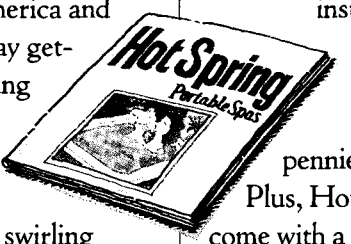

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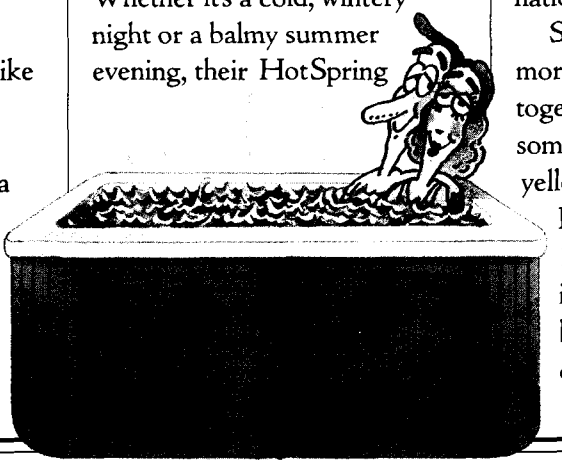

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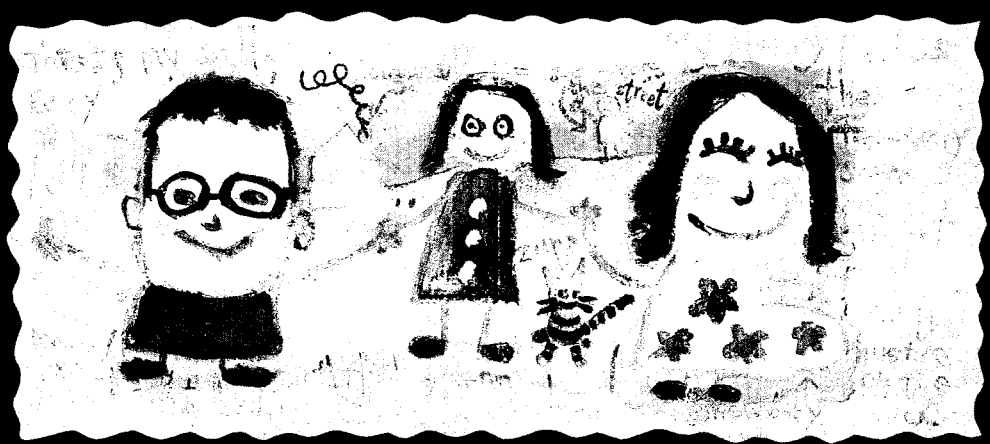

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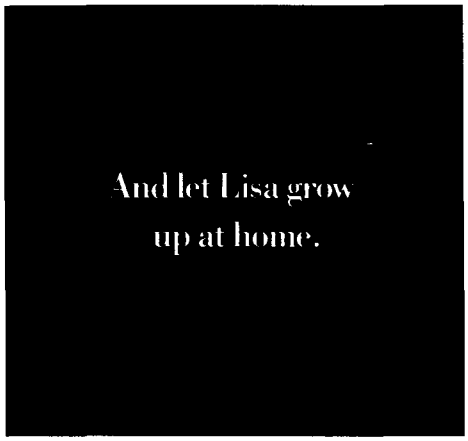

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It is not surprising, but worth stressing, that there is no tribunal in existence more skeptical than those through which you need to pass if your claim is to have been cured at Lourdes. One faces first the so-called Medical Bureau. It is a cadre of doctors who donate their time, spending periods of various lengths in residence at Lourdes. Their duty is to examine—their opportunity is to learn from—the phenomena that pass by. Only a minority of these men of science are professing Catholics.

On the extraordinary occasion when the Bureau, after exhaustive investigation, places a stamp of approval on the claims of a "*Curé*," it is saying formally that there is no known or hypothetical scientific explanation for the physical transformation the doctors have documented. The case goes then to a second medical examining body, an international committee whose headquarters are in Paris. If this body concurs, that validation is then referred to a canonical commission in the diocese in which the candidate lives; and the skepticism here is not only scientific but theological: the Church has almost always been the last to believe that a miracle actually took place, but of course prepared to believe that what took place *was* a miracle. In this respect the Church learns from Thomas, who declined to believe in the Resurrection until the palpability of Christ's wounds was experienced. Do not ask the ecclesiastical tribunal at Lourdes to acclaim that you have been miraculously cured (unless you have been). You would have better luck at that bank in London that continues to store remnants of the Czar's treasury announcing yourself as Anastasia.

The Immaculate Conception (c. 1678), by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo

Before the International Medical Committee will agree to pursue your case further, 16 questions (I am not responsible for the English rendition) have to be answered satisfactorily—questions such as: Has the diagnosis been established by adequate objective examination? Does the comprehensive clinical picture rule out psychogenic overlay? Does the prognosis rule out the possibility of spontaneous remission, natural cure, significant improvement, or long-term remission? Has the sick person noticed the disappearance of subjective symptoms? Did the cure appear completely contrary to the prognosis? Was the cure sudden and consistent with the disappearance of objective pathological signs?

A QUESTIONNAIRE, with every one of its taunts answered as a miracle would require, will not satisfy everybody. Emile Zola, a devout, indeed consecrated atheist, went to enormous pains, practical and poetic, to affirm his animating axiom, which he once reduced to simple words: "Even if I saw a miracle, I couldn't believe it." So eager was he to affirm his disbelief that he based one work of fact/fiction on a Lourdes pilgrim. The story was taken from life and he coped with his problem by simply falsifying the documented record, poor Zola. Every now and again a dedicated body of skeptics engages somebody's theatrical energies with the aim of faking his way through the Lourdes accreditation process in order to discredit it. My favorite of these is the young lady who arrived at Lourdes complaining of a lifelong affliction, getting worse as the years went by—an anal fistula. She took the baths and on emerging announced herself triumphantly as cured! She was taken to the Medical Bureau, where the doctors proceeded to put together her record—her family history, history of the illness, history of the cure. The paperwork having been done, the doctors were ready to go on to the next stage, a physical examination. The record gives us the ensuing exchange:

"Examine me—but why?"

"In order to verify your cure, madame."

"And all that I have been telling you—that is for nothing?"

"For nothing, madame, if we do not examine you."

"But I do not wish to be examined."

"In order to verify a cure, we must examine the patient. If you do not consent, we shall tear up the record."

"Then I shall not be verified?"

"No, madame." The dear lady faced a problem, and the chronicler, Mrs. Cranston, tells in her book of the proceedings:

"After much protesting and objecting, finally she yielded, and the examination took place, five or six doctors assisting.

"There was nothing whatever the matter with the woman, and never had been—certainly not the malady she described. When the doctors asked her to show them where the anal fistula was, she pointed to a little white scar (the vestige of an old cyst operation) quite high up on the back and in a spot where certainly no one ever had an anus."

Well, one does try. After protracted questioning the lady broke down. "She had been purposely sent, by an anti-religious organization of one of the big departments in the middle of France, to bring back a personal document showing that at the Medical Bureau of Lourdes they recognized miracles without even examining the patients." It is really quite charming, this confidence of the young lady impostor, that no gentlemanly doctor would propose to examine—that part of the body—in search of mere medical evidence.

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Fewer than one hundred "cures" have been certified by the church as miraculous. This number is drastically smaller than the number of "cures" plausibly claimed by men and women who have traveled to Lourdes but who for whatever reason (they did not care; they had not kept records; their local doctors would not cooperate) didn't submit to the rigorous examinations required; or else did so, and did not pass these tests. Mrs. Cranston, who spent many years in residence at Lourdes and engaged in meticulous record-keeping, estimates at ten thousand the number who have declared themselves cured. But even if her calculations are correct, that leaves us with one cure per ten or fifteen thousand pilgrims. The odds, one supposes without actually going to statistical archives, are not very different from what one might expect on buying a lottery ticket. People go to Lourdes for other reasons, and if my own experience is representative, they leave profoundly affected.

THE BOOK by Mrs. Cranston gives the record, as noted, of many documented cures. I select one, not because it is singular but because it is, in essential respects, typical. Marie Bailly was a patient of a French doctor who, when finally he complied with the family request that he accompany his patient to Lourdes, wrote down, for the record, what would be the transformation he would need to see before acknowledging that any cure had taken place. He confronted, first, a general question: What kind of ailment would qualify as miraculously treated? His answer: "An organic disease: a cancer disappearing; a bone regrown; a congenital dislocation vanishing."

He went on in his notes to describe the plight of his patient, a young woman in the last stages of tuberculous peritonitis. "I know her history," he recorded. "Her whole family died of tuberculosis. She has had tubercular sores, lesions of the lungs, and now, for the past few months, peritonitis diagnosed by both a general practitioner and the well-known Bordeaux surgeon, Bromilloux. Her condition is very grave. She may die right under my nose. If such a case were cured, it would indeed be a miracle."

One hour before Marie Bailly was carried to the grotto, he examined her yet again at one of the adjacent hospitals, remarking in his notes her white, emaciated face, her galloping pulse—150 to the minute—the distended abdomen, the ears and nails turning blue. He told the Sisters, "She may last a few more days, but she is doomed. Her heart is giving out. Death is very near."

The doctor accompanied Marie Bailly to the grotto. There he saw her face change color, losing its ashen hue. Her swollen abdomen flattened out under the blanket. Her pulse became calm and regular. She requested a glass of milk. Her respiration had become normal. Mrs. Cranston records the doctor's reaction. "The sweat broke out on his forehead. He felt as though someone had struck him on the head. His own heart began to pump furiously. It was the most 'momentous thing' he had ever seen."

The doctor roused himself from his trance and took his patient back to the hospital, where he examined her in the company of three other doctors. They confirmed what he knew already from his intimate knowledge of her case. His patient had been—cured. The doctor told a colleague. "When one reads about such things one cannot help suspecting some kind of charlatanism. But here is a cure I have seen with my own eyes. I have seen an apparently chronic invalid restored to health and normal life. . . . Such cures cannot be brought about by natural means."

Of course. One can't go any further than to say that a) there was a cure, and b) there is no *scientific* explanation for it. On the other hand, you cannot conclude using scientific methodology that the transformation was a "miracle." To do so would be to place oneself in the hands of the theologians. "**miracle** 1. a. [OED] *A marvelous event occurring within human experience, which cannot have been brought about by human power or by the operation of any natural agency, and must therefore be ascribed to the special intervention of the Deity . . .*"

The word is casually used in the modern world—"Miraculously, Silky Sullivan came from last place and won the race by a nose." But the dominant meaning is as given in the Oxford Dictionary: something caused by an act of divine intervention. If one is required to describe what happened to Marie Bailly as other than a "miracle" one needs to use words that don't come easily to the tongue. Was it a . . . *thaumaturgical event*? But in a) ruling out a natural cause, we are required b) to acknowledge a supernatural cause. In formal logic, it would not need to be a Christian agent that brought about the miracle, but given the story of Bernadette, Christianity does, well, come to mind; and anyway, the secular humanist has a problem because in his etiology there has to be a natural cause for every phenomenon. Those who seek relief from the quandary—If it wasn't a natural cause that effected the cure, what did?—will need to come up with a superforce of some sort. Who was it at the grotto in 1858? Madame Allah? The skeptics run the risk of being ambushed by: God/Christ/the Immaculate Conception. The whole Christian package.

There is, at most, one cure per ten thousand pilgrims. The odds are not very different from what one might expect on buying a lottery ticket.

But the Christian too is without *explanation* for what happens at Lourdes, because we cannot reason to why Marie Bailly found relief while so many others do not. But then this only reminds us that what in the secular coinage we would think of as stochastic (Why the death-dealing volcanic eruption here? the pestilence there?), religion ascribes to a divine order that countenances extemporaneous afflictions, natural and personal. God's ways are inscrutable. So where is the skeptic left? I thought of the liberating sentence of Chesterton in which he recounts that in his desperate search for a suitable cosmology, he had stumbled upon orthodoxy. It was chance that *I* stumbled, the second evening at Lourdes, on this paragraph in a Chesterton essay. GKC was an ardent admirer of W. B. Yeats; indeed he and the poet were friends. Chesterton is here reflecting on the endless search for timelessness on earth. "A very distinguished and dignified example of this paganism at bay is Mr. W. B. Yeats." He quotes a passage from Yeats's "delightful" memoirs:

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> I think it [Christianity] but deepened despair and multiplied temptation . . . Why are these strange souls born everywhere today, with hearts that Christianity, as shaped by history, cannot satisfy? Our love letters wear out our love; no school of painting outlasts its founders, every stroke of the brush exhausts the impulse; pre-Raphaelitism had some twenty years; Impressionism, thirty, perhaps. Why should we believe that religion can never bring round its antithesis? Is it true that our air is disturbed, as Melarme [sic] said, "by the trembling of the veil of the temple," or "that our whole age is seeking to bring forth a sacred book"? Some of us thought that book near towards the end of last century but the tide sank again.

"Of course," Chesterton moves in—"there are many minor criticisms of all this. The faith only multiplies temptation in the sense that it would multiply temptation to turn a dog into a man. And it certainly does not deepen despair, if only for two reasons: first, that despair to a Catholic is itself a spiritual sin and blasphemy; and second, that the despair of many pagans, often including Mr. Yeats, could not possibly be deepened. But what concerns me, in these introductory remarks, is his suggestion about the duration of movements. When he gently asks why Catholic Christianity should last longer than other movements, we may well answer even more gently: 'Why, indeed?' He might gain some light on why it should, if he would begin by inquiring why it does. He seems curiously unconscious that the very contrast he gives is against the case he urges. If the proper duration of a movement is twenty years, what sort of a movement is it that lasts nearly two thousand? If a fashion should last no longer than Impressionism, what sort of fashion is it that lasts about fifty times as long? Is it just barely conceivable that it is not a fashion?"

PILGRIMS WHO who travel to Lourdes make up their own schedules, in cooperation with the Administrative Office there. The routine of our group began one afternoon with Mass at the upper Basilica, one of the many churches. An odd sense of tranquillity settled on us. I can't offhand remember when last, other than at sea, I felt so little concern for timetables. On Friday there was a "Morning of Recollection" and the anointing of the sick at another chapel (St. Joseph's). There are three hospitals—more properly, hospices—all of them administered by volunteers. Few of us were sick, but we were reminded that from the day of birth, we are on our deathbeds. In the afternoon, Mass at the Salle Notre Dame, and in the evening a candlelight procession in front of the Rosary Basilica. It is not easy to imagine twenty thousand candles shaping a cross. The ensuing four days included a daily Mass in different churches; easy access to confessions, heard in six languages, throughout the day; the Stations of the Cross, twice life-sized bronze statuary, rising up a steep hillside, invoking the travail of Calvary. The schedule left several hours every day during which one could do as one chose (there are historical sites, including the birthplace of Bernadette, and the great, massive fort built during the Middle Ages), and one tends to choose to walk about, and to take keen pleasure in casual encounters.

The sense of the visit is rapidly communicated. There are thousands of gurneys (*voitures*, they are referred to) for the *malades*, the all-inclusive French word for the sick—again, propelled exclusively by volunteers. Perhaps every *malade* harbors the hope that he (or she) will be cured, but it is not reasonably expected; yet somehow it seems irrelevant as larger perspectives take hold. It is a part of the common faith that prayer can effect anything (*"Remember, most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided"*), but incantatory hyperbole is simply a ritualized form of docility. The sick who travel to Lourdes are there, yes, because of the undeniability of recorded miracles, but that isn't what brings as many as fifty thousand people a day to Lourdes, the great majority of them healthy. The reason so many people come, many of them on their second or tenth visit, is that what is effected is a sense of reconciliation, if not well-being. Hardly miraculous, unless one chooses to use the word as most appropriate for that buoyancy experienced on viewing the great processions, sharing with almost thirty thousand people an underground Mass, being lowered for three bracing seconds into one of the baths; suddenly noting the ambient serenity. These are Christians feeling impulses of their faith, and intimations of the lady in white.

'When he gently asks why Catholic Christianity should last longer than other movements, we may well answer even more gently, "Why, indeed?" '

They are in Lourdes because of this palpability of the emanations that gave birth to the shrine. The spiritual tonic is felt. If it were otherwise, the pilgrims would diminish in number, would, by now, have disappeared, as at Delphos, which one visits as a museum, not a shrine. What it is that fetches them is I think quite simply stated, namely a reinforced conviction that the Lord God loves His creatures, healthy or infirm; that they—we—must understand the nature of love, which is salvific in its powers; and that although we are free to attempt to divine God's purpose, we will never succeed in doing so. The reason is that we cannot know (the manifest contradictions are too disturbing) what is the purpose behind particular phenomena and therefore must make do with only the grandest plan of God, which treats with eternal salvation. To keep the faith: to do this (the grammar of assent) requires the discipline of submission, some assurance that those who are stricken can, even so, be happy; and that the greatest tonic of all is divine love, which is nourished by human love, even as human love is nourished by divine love.

Waiting to board the airplane to Paris I found myself in the company of three *malades*. They could walk, else they'd have been on one of the trains, on stretchers. One young man had a face wretchedly distorted—it brought to mind one of the unpleasant pictures of Picasso. Around his neck the attendant placed a plastic folder, his ticket inside, his travel arrangements upon landing at Orly explained. With heavy use of a heavy cane he could, so to speak, walk. He was treated, by this company returning from Lourdes, as—a member of the family, which he was, as Lourdes manages to make plain. □

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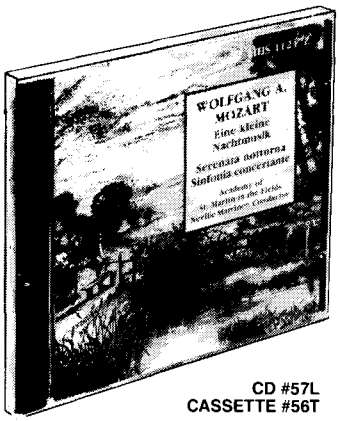

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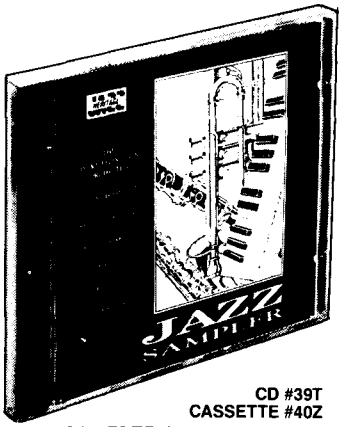

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Victims of the Class War

CAPITAL CRIME

As Congress reworks Mr. Clinton's budget, it remains loyal to his class-war rhetoric. However, one fact is overlooked: Boosting tax rates hurts everyone.

STEPHEN MOORE

IN VOTING on Bill Clinton's economic plan, Democrats must choose whether to torpedo the Clinton Presidency or the U.S. economy. It is generally assumed that they will dutifully opt for the latter, raising the question of whether the Democratic Party is now viscerally anti-growth. Certainly, some of the provisions of this $300-billion tax bill seem almost deliberately economically malicious.

A case in point is the proposal by Senate Democrats to raise the top capital-gains-tax rate from 28 to 30.8 per cent. Cloaked as always in "fairness" rhetoric, the proposal slipped through the Senate even though Congress's own forecasters at the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) concede that "a capital-gains-tax-rate above 28.5 per cent loses money for the government." As such, the policy is guaranteed to deliver a one–two body blow to the economy: it will cost jobs and reduce tax revenue at the same time. Depressingly, the sponsor of this rate hike is Senator Bill Bradley—widely considered to be the Democrat *least* hostile to progress and prosperity.

What is clear from this proposal is that Bradley and his Democratic colleagues have failed to learn any of the lessons from the last increase in the capital-gains tax, in 1986.

From the moment the 1986 tax act was passed, supply-siders warned that the 40 per cent hike in the capital-gains rate—from 20 to 28 per cent—would almost certainly drag down both capital formation and tax receipts. The central economic debate during the early Bush years was whether the capital-gains rate should be rolled back. Although a majority in both houses supported the idea, Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell quashed it with a filibuster. Relying on projections from the JCT showing that a capital-gains-tax cut would cost the Federal Government $11 billion, Mitchell and other leading Democrats recited the Left's mantra of "tax giveaway to the rich." The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) played a pivotal role in the debate by issuing a study indicating that 60 per cent of the gains would wind up in the wallets of Americans making over $200,000.

In fact, these claims were demagogic nonsense, as we see from data (based on actual tax returns) recently released by the IRS. The actual effect of the 1986 tax-rate increase was a substantial *reduction* in capital-gains-tax collections—mainly from the upper brackets. In response to the 40 per cent hike in the capital-gains-tax rate, investors, business owners, homeowners and farmers have become reluctant to sell their assets, thus creating a shrinking pool of capital gains for the government to tax. This phenomenon is known as the "lock-in effect." It is the way Americans keep the value of their appreciating investments safely at arm's length from the tax collector.

The graph on the next page shows that the experience since 1986 fits a consistent historical pattern: higher capital-gains-tax rates mean fewer capital gains to tax. Real, taxable capital gains are now just half what they were in 1985, even though real GNP is about 20 per cent higher and the Dow Jones has risen by roughly 40 per cent. The drop-off has been so severe that in both 1990 and 1991 real capital gains were lower than in any year since 1978.

From 1980 to 1985, capital-gains-tax collections skyrocketed by 12 per cent annually; but since the 1986 Act, from 1987 to 1991, collections have fallen by 8 per cent per year. A forthcoming study prepared for Representative Dick Armey of the Joint Economic Committee finds that if the capital-gains rate had remained at 20 per cent and realizations had continued to grow at their 1980–85 pace, revenues would have been almost $60 billion higher from 1986 to 1991. We are now on the wrong side of the famous Laffer Curve.

Needed: Team of Astrologers

FOR THE crystal-ball gazers at the Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Committee on Taxation, these tax data are a source of embarrassment. These agencies rely on static economic analysis. Static analysis is the bizarre notion that changes in the tax code do not alter people's behavior. Back in the late 1980s the CBO predicted 1991 taxable capital gains of $269 billion, while JCT predicted realizations of $285 billion. The actual figure: $108 billion. Both sets of "experts" were off by an

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ILLUSTRATION BY JEFF FISHER

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astounding 150 per cent! Congress might do better using astrologists. (It would be a lot cheaper too: Americans now spend more than $25 million a year on the JCT and CBO.)

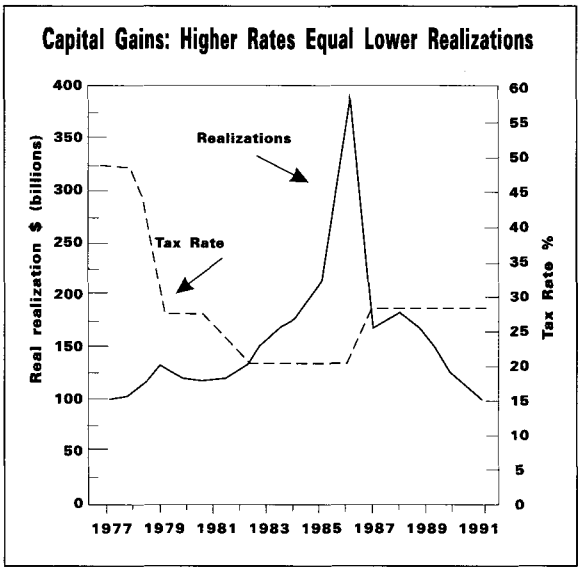
These errors also point to the absurdity of the charge that a capital-gains-tax cut would have been a give-away for the affluent. The JCT's celebrated figure that 60 per cent of the gains from a rate cut would have been captured by the rich was predicated on the erroneous assumption that the rich would continue to sell assets as they had during the Eighties when tax rates were low. Here is the plain truth: millionaires are today paying substantially less in capital-gains tax than they did in the 1980s.

This fiscal paradox—that higher tax rates mean lower taxes paid by the rich—is something that Democrats seem incapable of learning. For example, the 1990 budget deal, which now looks like a test run for Clinton's tax package, was supposed to raise revenue from the wealthy by increasing the top income-tax rate from 28 to 31 per cent. According to IRS returns, tax payments by those with incomes over $250,000 fell from $106.1 to $99.6 billion the first year those new tax rates took effect, while tax payments by all other income groups increased by more than $3 billion. Harvard economist Robert Barro reports in the *Wall Street Journal* that the share of taxes paid by the rich has *declined*, from 22 per cent in the late 1980s, after President Reagan cut tax rates, to 20 per cent last year, after President Bush raised them.

Losing Argument

DEFENDERS of the current treatment of capital gains maintain that the tax revenues have declined only because of the recession. This argument is unconvincing: as the graph shows, the drop-off in capital-gains realizations did not begin with the recession, but two and a half years before it, in 1987—as it happens, right after the capital-gains-tax rate was increased. Furthermore, the much deeper recession of 1981–82 did not prevent capital-gains realizations from rising by nearly 20 per cent after President Reagan cut the capital-gains-tax rate to 20 per cent.

The most pernicious impact of the 1986 capital-gains-tax-rate increase, however, has nothing to do with depriving the government of revenues. It is that entrepreneurial activity has been stifled. Today small businesses are not being formed and expanded, jobs are not being created, and investment is not growing at the pace that they were in the 1980s. Capital gains are the reward that investors receive for engaging in vital risk-taking activities—e.g., starting a new enterprise. Since almost three-quarters of new ventures go belly-up within five years, entrepreneurs and investors are essentially balancing the inherent risk of large losses from a new business against the opportunity of a high pay-off. Raising the capital-gains tax substantially reduces the attractiveness of the pay-off in return for risking one's money.



This is not just an ivory-tower theory of the way capitalism works: it is a phenomenon that is well documented by historical evidence. For example, the availability of seed capital for small start-up firms exploded in the 1980s—until the 1986 Tax Reform Act; since then it has nose-dived. In 1986 real venture-capital finances for promising young firms was $4.2 billion; this funding level fell to an anemic $1.4 billion in 1991. Even a rebound in 1992 only brought the level to $2.5 billion. This is called a credit crunch—and it is in large part a byproduct of muddle-headed, anti-investment tax-policy.

Venture-capital funds tend to migrate to high-technology companies in industries that are of critical importance to international competitiveness: computer software, biotechnology, computer engineering, electronics, aerospace, pharmaceuticals, and so forth. President Clinton and his Democratic colleagues in Congress profess to want to assist such firms. But here is what anti-capital tax-policies have done for such industries. Between 1986 and 1991 the number of firms receiving venture-capital financing dropped off a cliff—from 1,512 to 792. There was an improvement to 1,100 firms receiving financing in 1992, but this was still lower than in any year in the 1980s.

The Venture Capital Association concludes what seems patently obvious to all but our elected representatives in Washington: "Informal investors, who commit some $50 billion per year to small growth companies, have reduced their venture investments because the current tax code does not provide them with incentives to earn capital gains income." The losers here are not the super-rich with funds to invest; they can simply put their money in risk-free treasury securities or tax-free municipal bonds—or invest overseas. The losers are the entrepreneurs who can't get financing for their businesses and the workers whom they cannot hire. Studies show that roughly half of all high-tech firms got their original financing from either the founders themselves or from family, friends, or informal investors.

Memo to Mr. Clinton

PRESIDENT Clinton has said repeatedly that he wants an "investment-led recovery." If he really means this, what he should be trying to do is convince Congress to chop the capital-gains rate in half and prospectively index gains for inflation for *all* types of investment—small businesses, stocks, farms, real estate, and so forth. This would unleash a wave of asset trading, thus freeing up billions of dollars to finance the promising new investments. A 1993 report by the Texas-based Institute for Policy Innovation finds that just indexing capital gains for inflation would add

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$511 billion to GDP by 1997, create 550,000 new jobs, and raise $110 billion of new capital-gains and other revenues for the government. Those numbers could raise even Mr. Clinton's flagging popularity.

Whether the Democrats in Washington will regain their senses on capital gains is impossible to predict. But what is even more puzzling is why pro-growth Republicans continue to be paralyzed with fear on the issue. They do not seem to understand that the intellectual debate is over: their side won.

To be sure, this is comforting news only to the extent that data and cold facts have any bearing whatsoever on

Fairness a Two-Year-Old Can Understand

VALUES have been on my mind lately. My husband and I are in the process of adopting a twenty-month-old. That process forces prospective parents suddenly to articulate concepts on which their thoughts would develop naturally if the child arrived in the usual way. Some values, such as "fairness," are harder to articulate than others.

Along came President Clinton to the rescue: "My tax plan is fair because 6 per cent of the people are going to pay 74 per cent of the taxes." It seemed popular to the cheering crowd on TV. But would it pass the TDL Test? Could I explain fairness this way to young Troy Daniel Lindsey?

"Troy, when you get to school you may have a teacher who gives out homework fairly. You and some other child will be asked to do three-quarters of the class's homework while the other 28 children will, together, have to do the other quarter."

It wasn't going to work. I couldn't think of any way that having 6 per cent of the people do 74 per cent of anything made sense, especially since it meant that some 94 per cent only did 26 per cent.

Along came my ever-helpful economist husband. He said, "On the other hand, dear, the 6 per cent earn a lot more than 6 per cent of the income." According to the Department of Commerce, the top 6 per cent of the people earn 21 per cent of the income. The President thought it was fair that the people who earned 21 per cent of the income should pay 74 per cent of the taxes, while the people who earned 79 per cent of the income should pay 26 per cent of the taxes. No, you can jiggle the numbers, but they still don't pass the TDL test. Especially since the reason why the 6 per cent earn more than the rest is probably that they also do more of the work.

Then my husband gave me the real reason why this was fair: "You know, we're part of the 94 per cent. We're not going to have to pay any more income taxes or payroll taxes under the President's plan, just a few hundred more dollars in energy taxes." I wasn't too thrilled with the few hundred dollars in extra taxes, but I was relieved that we weren't going to have to pay 12 times our share.

That also explained the cheering crowds. The plan was "fair" to them. We could enjoy whatever the government did with the taxes for only about 25 cents on the dollar. In other words, what the President was really saying was, "My plan is fair *to you* because the other 6 per cent are going to have to pay 74 per cent of the taxes." That is President Policywonk's way of saying what Russell Long used to: Don't tax you. Don't tax me. Put three-quarters of the taxes on that fellow behind the tree.

Now *this* definition of fairness would pass the TDL Test: Troy, something is fair if you get the better part of the bargain. But there's one problem. He doesn't need me to teach him that value. In his two-year-old world view, he already believes that. That's why he cries when he doesn't get what he wants. No, I'm going to have to search elsewhere for a concept of fairness to teach young Troy. Fortunately, when it comes to values, finding sources other than our President doesn't pose much of a problem. The real problem is that our political process seems rutted in a two-year-old's concept of fairness.

Conservatives have presented many reasoned arguments against higher taxes. With higher rates people work less. They save less. They invest less. Higher tax rates slow the rate of economic growth, making everyone poorer.

Ultimately, however, those arguments accept the moral premise of fairness held by my twenty-month-old son and our 47-year-old President. Consider carefully what is being implied by all the conservative arguments. We are telling the state and the voters that they will get more out of rich people with lower rates than with higher ones. No argument about the objective. Haven't we conservatives been trapped into agreeing with the liberals that soaking the rich is fine, it's just that we have a technical argument about how best to accomplish the feat?

What is needed is for conservatives to raise a *moral* argument against higher taxes. Asking people to work two days out of five for the state is unfair. It is wrong. Lincoln said that no man should live by the sweat of another man's brow.

Fairness comes when all parties to an arrangement feel that they have benefited from cooperating. That is why most deals in the marketplace among consenting parties are considered fair. A deal is patently unfair when some parties gain at others' expense. Politically, our system does not require the acquiescence of all parties, only a majority.

That is why President Clinton spends so much time reassuring people that his plan is fair. He could easily make a very truthful pitch to a majority of voters that what he is doing is a good deal for them. But he goes further. He is using the moral authority of his office to persuade people that what he is doing is fair, even though their inner sense of justice tells them that it just isn't so.

He is aided and abetted by the moral silence of conservatives on this issue. Until we conservatives make a moral argument on what constitutes civic fairness, as well as our rational arguments about rates and revenues, the crowds will still cheer any demagogue who shouts, "Soak the rich."

—SUSAN A. LINDSEY

Mrs. Lindsey is a freelance writer living in Clifton, Virginia.

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the political debate in Washington. The sad irony is that the Democrats are endlessly conspiring to find new ways to extract more money from the rich, by means guaranteed to do the opposite. □

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Just when you thought the Persian Gulf was safe—here comes Iran.

IAN ALEXANDER

WHAT in the world is Iran up to? For the past two years the attention of the rest of the world was, understandly, focused on neighboring Iraq and its evil genie, Saddam Hussein. When the pundits bothered to look at Iran, what they saw was the reassuring "moderation" of President Rafsanjani. He was seeking to re-open ties to the West, settling old seizure-of-assets claims from Khomeini's day, exchanging ambassadors with various Arab countries. But just when the Persian Gulf seemed somewhat safe, Iran-exported mischief began again. There are even Iranian links with the World Trade Center terrorists.

Nearer home, Iran has carried out initiatives affecting four of the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)—all except Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Iran had long contested ownership of three islands in the Gulf with the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In April of last year, Iran asserted sole control over these islands.

Second, in an effort to loosen the Saudis' embrace of Qatar, the tiny, peninsular emirate extending from the eastern shore of Saudi Arabia, Teheran agreed to build a huge water pipeline under the Gulf. This would free Qatar from its dependency on Saudi desalinated water.

Third, Omani Sultan Qaboos, who had enjoyed cordial relations with the Shah of Iran, has lately permitted his officials to talk with Rafsanjani's emissaries. Their talks have reportedly covered a range of issues but have focused on the security of the all-important Straits of Hormuz, gateway from the Gulf to the Arabian Sea and the world beyond.

Finally, Iran has renewed its claim of sovereignty over the island state of Bahrain, connected to Saudi Arabia by a 14-mile-long causeway.

All these maneuvers add up to an all-out attempt by the Rafsanjani regime to dominate the huge Arabian-peninsula oil basin, the repository of more than 65 per cent of the world's petroleum reserves.

Iran can most easily exercise influence on the east side of that peninsula, but it is busy on the western side too.

As Yemen feels its way to some form of democracy, Iranian militants have incited riots in the major cities. Across the Sea of Aden, hundreds of destitute, desperate men have been trained in guerrilla tactics and infiltrated back into the never very stable northeast of Somalia, on the very Horn of Africa. In the Sudan, military and financial aid from Teheran is propping up the harshly fundamentalist Beshir regime. Egyptian fundamentalists are also receiving funding (and assassination-style training) from Iranian supporters. Sudan shares a border with the internally fragile Egypt, whose stability is critical to the region.

Further west, Iran's leadership has established an almost cordial relationship with Libya's Muammar Qaddafi. And in Algeria, Teheran has long trained and financed self-described "democratic" fundamentalists (an oxymoron, as Islamic fundamentalism is by definition implacably hostile to democracy).

Consistent with all these shenanigans, Iran is buying a massive array of military hardware, ranging from jet fighters to submarines to guided missiles. Its major suppliers are China, North Korea, and Russia.

It may be asked: How can Iran's radically ascetic Shiite Muslim regime, considered heretical by mainstream Sunni Muslims, foment all this trouble? There are two keys. First, lasting personal relationships were built up during the Afghan counterinsurgency, when the Iranian Revolutionary Guard helped train and supply thousands of volunteers, drawn from every country now threatened. Second, hard-core revolution-at-any-price extremists are willing to accept funds and training even from those who would otherwise be enemies.

What Does Saddam Say?

DOESN'T ALL this activity alarm the Iraqi enemy? Apparently not. Some regional leaders believe there is at least an implicit *entente* between Teheran and Baghdad. Tyrannical Saddam and pragmatic Rafsanjani, this thinking goes, both want to take advantage of the prevailing wisdom that the region requires a relatively powerful Iraq to offset Iran.

This highly suspect insistence on dynamic tension, whose previous fruits included the failure to eliminate Saddam during Desert Storm, tends towards two outcomes: unending Iraqi mischief, domestically and on the world stage; domination by Iran of the earth's most extensive vital oil reserves.

Observers looking for evidence for this *entente* cite the otherwise inexplicable behavior of Qatar. Alone among member states of the GCC, Qatar, an active participant in the coalition that dislodged Iraq from Kuwait, has again exchanged ambassadors with Baghdad. Would Qatar really jeopardize its much prized water-pipeline agreement by establishing such links without Iranian consent? Hardly, most old hands believe.

The final clue: After decades of contention over whether the Gulf's proper name is Persian or Arabian Gulf, the usually insensitive Iran has come forward with a surprisingly subtle pro-

Mr. Alexander has followed Middle Eastern affairs for the past quarter-century.

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posal (reportedly conditionally accepted by Saddam): rename it the Islamic Gulf—*Khaleej al-Islam*. Such a move sends a clear message, both to the oil-dependent West and to the restless Middle Eastern masses. The message reads: It's us (Muslims) against them (the infidels); and the infidels had better play the game by our rules, in and around our Islamic Gulf.

The Good News

WITH ALL the madness noted above (along with the probably fatal illness of Jordan's King Hussein, and the probable succession of his underwhelming brother Hassan), there are a number of good things happening.

First, Turkey, extending its current streak of stability to more than a decade, is working actively to satisfy the reasonable demands of its Kurdish minority, weed out the revolutionaries, and provide humanitarian support to the beleaguered Iraqi Kurdish community. It is also spreading its regional influence as a sensible Islamic alternative to Iran's fundamentalist model.

Further south, Saudi Arabia remains stable at home and consistently cautious in its foreign policy. Lebanon, under newly installed Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, a long-time Riyadh resident and confidant of Saudi King Fahd, has its best chance in nearly twenty years to re-stabilize and rebuild (and eventually to persuade the Syrians to leave). Syria's Hafez Al-Assad, while never totally to be trusted, has played along with the peace process for nearly two years, and has confided to several associates that he sees the current period as offering real possibilities for peaceful solutions to the snarl of disputes among Syria, Lebanon, and Israel. Yemen, with significant oil reserves coming on line, is starting the transition from a socialist dictatorship to a market-oriented modified democracy.

Across the Red Sea, Somalia's thin line of hard-pressed tribal leaders appear to have the grit to remain at peace, particularly in the independently emerging north. Egypt appears able to contain the fundamentalists' destabilizing efforts. (The question: Can economic rebuilding move fast enough to meet the barest aspirations of the 55 million and ever-growing population?) Tunisia's transition following the demise of President-for-Life Habib Bourgiba seems to be withstanding subversion by more oxymoronic fundamentalist democrats.

By today's standards, that's a reasonably long list of favorably leaning conditions. But the favorable factors are all fragile and likely to be undermined by Iran's new push for influence as the leader of an extremist campaign against both the West and the West's "friends" in the Islamic world. If the West remains passive in the face of Iran's challenge, all the above dominoes could come tumbling down. What is needed is an active Western policy in the region, including the following steps:

1. Announce, and enforce, a sweeping arms-sales embargo on Iran.

2. Execute strong and far-reaching basing agreements with Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, and northern Somalia, plus more extensive air and seaport visitation agreements with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the UAE. Under such a system, naval and air bases in northern Somalia would provide security cover to a sweeping arc from Teheran and Baghdad in the northeast, to Algiers and Tripoli in the northwest, and extending to the entire African continent.

3. Train the fragile internal-security forces of the UAE, Bahrain, and Kuwait in counter-insurgency, both in the United States and with small *cadres* of trainers stationed locally.

4. Convince renegade Qatar that its future remains with its old friends, not with the foredoomed-to-conflict Iraq and Iran. Saudi Arabia might be convinced to put paid to the point by going the extra mile in resolving its nonsensical border dispute with Qatar, a dispute that involves a trackless patch of desert which, as far as anyone knows, harbors no oil.

5. Mediate real *rapprochement* between Saudi Arabia and Yemen, repairing the damage done during Desert Shield/Storm when the Yemeni regime sided with Iraq.

6. Maintain an active and fair role as honest broker, woefully neglected since January 20, to promote the Arab–Israeli peace negotiations.

7. Put pressure, gently but unrelentingly, on an indecisive Hosni Mubarak to bring his country's economy toward the free market. On the agenda: privatizing virtually all sectors of Egypt's horrifically inefficient state-owned industrial and distribution sector; stimulating massive capital inflow; easing the economic pain of millions of citizens with a targeted retraining, agrarian, and services-oriented program.

8. And Iraq? Every effort should be made to remove Saddam Hussein from the scene, as fast as possible, with concomitant efforts to support the opposition coalition that has developed. The man has not changed in any fundamental way, nor will he. He cannot—and need not—be tolerated.

All too much for a new Administration, untutored in foreign policy and faced with multiple domestic challenges? Very possibly. If the President wanted to garner major international kudos, admittedly at high risk but with commensurately major domestic

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impact, nothing would do better than to be clearly committed to resolving a number of the Middle East's pestiferous problems—most importantly, Saddam Hussein, Israel's relations with the Palestinians, and Somalia's agony.

Most importantly to the long-term economic health of the United States and the entire world, however, an integrated regional policy that squarely but quietly focused on Iran's extensive plotting would stabilize old friends in the area and secure the world's fragile, vital petroleum lifeline. □

The EPA's Lead Patrol

SHIFTING DIRT

If an expensive government program seems misdirected—look again.

PETER SAMUEL

AT ABOUT a dozen housing lots in Midvale, Utah, a former mining town 12 miles south of Salt Lake City, contract crews are felling trees and removing fences. At several houses the tree and fence clearing is complete, and backhoes and Bobcat skid-steer loaders are scooping up the soil and putting it in dump trucks, which will cart it away.

What's going on is a Superfund "soil remediation" program, being conducted at old mining towns across the country, from Leadville, Colorado, to Palmerton, Pennsylvania. The soil near old mines is contaminated with lead, and, according to the EPA, the only way to remove the health hazard is to remove the soil. The process is slow and cumbersome because the earth-movers have to stop frequently for soil testing. Employees of an environmental-services laboratory sitting by the curb in a van jump out every hour or so and take soil samples. Only when they have determined that the machines have reached down to soil with less than 500 parts per million (ppm) of lead will the excavation in that yard end, and fresh soil be trucked in.

Lead contamination is a serious health concern; among other problems, in sufficient doses it causes brain damage in children. Removing such a threat would be worth a great

Mr. Samuel is an NR *contributing editor who writes on the environment.*

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THE EPA MODEL VS. REALITY

Site	Average yard soil lead level ppm	EPA model prediction of children with over 10 μg/dl	Children measured with blood lead over 10 μg/dl	EPA model prediction of average blood lead level μg/dl	Measured average blood lead level μg/dl
Smuggler Mountain, Colo.	500 to 100,000	99%	2%	Not revealed	2.6
Butte, Mont.	960	15%	5%	6.1	3.5
Leadville, Colo.	920	41%	8%	Not revealed	4.8
Midvale, Utah	720	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	4.9, 5.2
Palmerton, Pa.	850	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	6.5
Triumph, Idaho	950	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	3, 4.4
Granite City, Ill.	1,160	Unknown	7.8% to 16%	Unknown	5.8, 6.9
Inner-cities study	NA	NA	19%	NA	12
Inner Boston	2,000 to 3,000	NA	69% to 71%	NA	20, 30
Inner Cincinnati	500	NA	52%	NA	11.7

deal of expense. But two questions need to be asked before action is taken: First, is there a danger in this particular locale? Second, will the methods to be used alleviate it? Those are questions that the EPA seldom seems to ask.

Is There a Problem?

WHEN the EPA invaded Midvale, local officials decided to see how bad the town's lead problem actually was. They urged residents to have blood tests, and found that the average blood level of lead was 5.2 μg/dl (micrograms per deciliter), about the national average and a fraction of the average level in the inner-city neighborhoods of Boston, Baltimore, or Cincinnati (15 μg/dl is widely accepted as the danger threshhold).

How, then, does the EPA reckon Midvale has a serious problem? It uses something called an Integrated Uptake Bio-Kinetic model (abbreviated IU/BK). This model is supposed to predict equilibrium levels of lead in people's blood from the level of lead in the soil where they live. The IU/BK model predicts that someone living in a house whose yard has 1,000 ppm of lead in its soil will have blood lead levels of nearly 12 μg/dl, and that a third of children living in such a house will have levels above the danger threshold of 15 μg/dl. The EPA's model predicts that children living in houses whose yards have as little as 500 ppm will have average blood lead levels of 8.4 μg/dl, with one in twelve being over the 15 μg/dl threshold. But as the table shows, in the few cases where the EPA has revealed its data, the model has massively over-predicted human uptake of soil lead.

The reason has to do with "bio-availability." If the lead is not in a form that can readily be absorbed by human beings—by inhaling lead dust, by drinking contaminated water, or by eating fruits and vegetables that have absorbed lead from the soil—it doesn't matter what the concentrations are. Fine particles of highly soluble leads—such as lead acetate in old paint or the lead deposits close to major highways from years of leaded gasoline—are absorbed in very high proportion. By contrast the larger-grained lead sulfides and sulfates and lead oxides that are typical of mine waste are little ingested, because of their size, and when they are ingested, they are little absorbed through the small intestine into the bloodstream. A review of studies on lead published in *Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology* says that mining wastes pose relatively little health risk because they typically are of "large particle size, which decreases the bio-availability of lead in the gastro-intestinal tract: and lead sulfide (the commonest mine waste form) is absorbed less in the gastro-intestinal tract compared to other lead species." Even in areas where there might be a problem, nutrition can provide much of the answer. Healthful minerals such as zinc, magnesium, iron, and calcium in the diet can help block lead from being absorbed by the digestive system.

Apart from the distinction, which the EPA ignores, between ambient and ingested lead, there is serious question about the accuracy of the EPA's tests. Ron Ivy, a city official in another afflicted town, Park City, Utah, says that he learned to take nothing from the EPA on trust. "We took the precaution of splitting samples three ways, sending the same samples we sent them to two other laboratories. None of the results matched up. Often they were way off. In the air tests they said we had 'significant levels of lead' in the air when the levels measured at 6/1000 of the safe ambient air standards. In other cases they got high readings from air filters that we photographed lying around in the dirt beforehand. During water sampling they used drilling rigs with dirty contaminated augurs from another site."

Out of Focus

GRANITE CITY, Illinois, is a struggling industrial town just across the Mississippi from St. Louis. A Granite City alderman, Craig Tarpoff, says Granite City's water supply has some real problems with lead contamination, but that doesn't concern the EPA. It is too busy with its plans for removing soil from the yards of 1,600 houses and

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adding it to the waste pile from a long inoperative smelter.

Lead levels in yard soil in Granite City have been measured at 2,500 to 3,000 ppm, and in some alleyways once filled with slag-pile material there are places with 100,000 ppm. The old smelter waste pile itself, exposed to the wind, measures no less than 300,000 ppm, or 30 per cent lead. The EPA says it wants to get all yard soil down to 500 ppm and cap the enlarged waste pile with a layer of clay.

With levels of several thousand parts per million in the soil there should be a lead-poisoning crisis in Granite City if the EPA bio-kinetic model had any relationship to reality. In fact the average blood lead level of Granite City children tested out at 6.9 µg/dl—close to the national average. A blood lead study by the Illinois Department of Public Health showed 3 per cent of children with lead levels over 15 µg/dl and another 11 per cent in the range of 10 to 15 µg/dl. Dr. Renate Kimbrough and Maurice LeVois, of the Institute for Evaluating Health Risks, Washington, D.C., both confirm that there is not a special problem with soil lead in Granite City. LeVois added that there was no correlation between proximity to the lead waste pile and blood lead levels.

But there was a correlation with flaking paint on houses. Alderman Tarpoff says city and state officials, acting upon this information, undertook simple house dust cleanups using contact paper. Removing flaking paint by this means, they got blood lead levels of afflicted children down dramatically.

The EPA's clean-up scheme is thus not likely to do much good in Granite City, and it might well bring harm. By concentrating all the lead-contaminated material in a single hazardous-waste pile, it may increase the long-term risk of lead pollution of ground-water. Already in Granite City, the ground-water lead level ranges from 500 to 3,000 ppm; the drinking-water standard is 15 ppm. According to the city, the EPA managed to miss this problem in its testing. According to Alderman Tarpoff, their tester used a fine filter that screened out lead salts, giving them a reading too low by orders of magnitude.

Midvale faces a similar problem. Environmental engineer Bruce Nieveen points out that "The EPA scheme is putting the leaded soil right on the tailings pile next to the Jordan River and very close to the water table. We think there is a possibility of contamination of the main aquifer of Salt Lake Valley. The city wants the contaminated material in the tailings area removed from its present location to eliminate this risk, whereas the EPA wants it capped in place."

The Root of This Evil

IF the EPA's clean-up is as unproductive—indeed, counterproductive—as all this evidence suggests, why does it persist? The answer, alas, is money. There's no money for the feds to garner from the flaking paint of inner-city tenements, but out in the mining settlements of the West are many deep pockets. Using the powers Congress granted it under the Superfund law in 1980, the EPA can force anyone with money and with even the most tenuous connection to the supposed problems of a listed Superfund site—a Potentially Responsible Party (PRP)—to part with millions of dollars. In the case of Midvale, the EPA managed to extract $62 million from three companies (Arco, Sharon Steel, and UV Trust) for "hazardous waste clean-up." In Leadville, Carl Miller, the director of the local mining museum, says the EPA's major goal appears to be to squeeze settlement money out of the big metals company ASARCO, which still operates a mine there.

One town brought the problem on itself. In the Smuggler Mountain area of Aspen, Colorado, where there had been a silver mine until 1893, very high lead levels (up to 20,000 ppm) were measured in the soil in 1981, right around the time the Superfund law was passed. Naïvely the city commissioners thought the EPA might help them and wrote it a letter inviting it to investigate and design a cleanup. Instead the EPA named the city as a PRP and declared a 110-acre residential area a Superfund site. The city has been at war with the EPA ever since. "Off with the EPA" is a popular bumper sticker among people who 12 years later have seen no cleanup, but whose property—as in every other affected town—has been rendered almost valueless by Superfund status. Blood lead levels among the residents measured at an average of only 2.6 µg/dl.

How might the EPA have approached this problem if its purpose really were to lower blood lead levels? Dr. William Buck, a toxicologist and director of the National Animal Poison Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana, says it is pretty clear that levels of alkalinity (high pH) and the presence of organic matter in the soil (high cation exchange capacity) prevent lead salts from being taken up by plants and animals and effectively negate lead as a health problem. He says what the EPA should be doing is treating the soil, not carting it away. Where a pH level is low, the answer is regular lime applications; where the organic fraction is low, compost and mulch should be added.

Buck's remedy—a cheap and simple one—is not a flight of fancy. In the 1960s and 1970s, as a veterinary consultant, Buck took part in an experiment to lower the lead levels in livestock that had been grazing on grass contaminated by dirty smelter emissions. After the fields were limed, the animals showed spectacular reductions in body lead contamination. But the EPA airily dismisses Dr. Buck's suggested liming as "unproven."

Pre-Emptive Action

EPA representative Jim Scherer in Colorado once told a local meeting he "hated Superfund" and that it was "an Eastern law not designed for the West" but that it was his job to enforce it. Other EPA offi-

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cials will not concede even that much. When residents point to blood lead levels well within the normal range, agents such as Frank Peters reply that blood lead levels are "irrelevant." He explained the agency's stance thus: "We don't have to prove a present [lead] risk, just a potential risk."

Triumph, Idaho, is part of Sun Valley, which my road atlas of America classes as among the nation's "Regal Resorts." It tells me that Averell Harriman, as chairman of Union Pacific in the mid 1930s, founded it as a ski resort to build business for his railroad. By the 1940s, "such luminaries as Ernest Hemingway and Gary Cooper graced the lodge." On the southern edge of national forests that stretch uninterrupted four hundred miles through Montana up into Canada, Sun Valley has developed into "one of the nation's most beautiful holiday complexes"—64 ski runs, 4 golf courses, horse riding, and more. It is a place of great natural beauty and bountiful good health, says the atlas. But the EPA has ranked adjacent Triumph among the most dangerous Superfund sites in the nation—90.3 on its Hazard Ranking System, on a scale where Times Beach, Missouri, even at the height of the since discredited dioxin scare, ranked below 60.

No matter that Pat McGavran, a toxicologist with the state health department, found an average blood-lead reading of 4 μg/dl in a test of 38 longtime Triumph residents.

Says Donna Rose, a local businesswoman: "The EPA people in their L. L. Bean clothing aren't going to want to go to inner-city areas where there are real lead problems, but no money. It's much more fun for them to come to Sun Valley and save us white people who live in rich areas. The EPA attorney says they are searching the records for PRPs. Meanwhile there are thousands of people who are political prisoners of the EPA, people whose lives are on hold because of the financial freeze on our properties."

Chris Field, the EPA's on-the-scene coordinator, is unimpressed. When the local blood-lead levels were pointed out to him, he replied that he works for the Environmental *Protection* Agency, not the environmental reaction agency. "We don't wait to act until a problem has arisen. We act when we believe the potential for a problem exists." □

Norplant v. Abortion

A MORAL CHOICE

Would Norplant simply stop unwanted pregnancies —or increase destructive teen sex?

DOUGLAS J. BESHAROV

SINCE its approval by the FDA in December 1990, Norplant, the implantable contraceptive, has been both lauded and vilified. As a nearly infallible birth-control device, Norplant is seen by many as an important new tool to prevent unwanted pregnancy, and they have pressed to make it available in various settings—including high-school clinics.

Others, however, are concerned that the easy availability of Norplant, particularly in school-based clinics, will lead to increased sexual activity among teenagers. Writing in these pages, for example, Richard John Neuhaus said that such programs lend tacit approval to premarital teen sex. He argues that, by promoting the use of contraceptives like Norplant, public officials are sending the message that teen sex is commonplace and chastity is abnormal. According to Neuhaus, the only proper way to reduce teen pregnancy is to promote abstinence ["The Wrong Way to Go," Feb. 1].

Like Fr. Neuhaus, we should all be disturbed by the high level of sexual activity among teenagers. Every year, more teenagers are having more sex, with increasing frequency, and at younger ages. This trend started in the 1960s and continued well into the late 1980s. Rates of sexual experience increased about 80 per cent between 1970 and 1988, according to the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), a national in-person survey of women ages 15 to 44 conducted in 1982 and again in 1988. Although rates have now apparently leveled off, today over half of all unmarried teenage females report engaging in sexual intercourse at least once.

With this increase in sexual activity have come large increases in teen abortions, out-of-wedlock births, welfare dependency, and sexually transmitted diseases. So worries about teen sex go beyond nostalgia for the past.

Condoning Teen Sex?

NEUHAUS is also right to warn us about "solutions" that might make the problem worse. As he points out, the level of teen sexuality is easily exaggerated. If half of all teenage girls have had sex, half have not. Moreover, this is half of all teens ages 15 to 19. Eighteen- and 19-year-olds, most of whom have graduated from high school, many of whom are in college, and some of whom are married (surveys are not limited to unmarried teens), are much more likely to be sexually active than are 15-year-olds (70 per cent compared to 25 per cent). Even these statistics are deceptive. Many teens, particularly younger ones, have sex sporadically. Sexually active teen males, for example, report that they go without sex an average of six months each year.

Thus, there is substantial room for yet higher levels of sexual activity among teens. Easier access to a more effective contraceptive, such as Norplant, would probably lead some already sexually active teens to have more sex. That's what happened when the pill appeared in the 1960s. But would Norplant lead more young people to *start* having sex?

Even more than the birth-control pill, Norplant is really only suitable for females who have sex regularly. A

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teenage girl cannot simply stop at the drugstore on the way to a date to pick up Norplant, "just in case." She must have a physician implant the device, which is expensive—between $500 and $750. Moreover, since the device is usually visible, at least faintly, she is unlikely to want the implant unless her sexual activity is already known, particularly to her parents.

That is why the first (and thus far the sole) school to make Norplant available was the Laurence Paquin School in Baltimore, a special facility for pregnant and parenting teens. Not only are these teenagers obviously sexually active, but they have also demonstrated that they need help in controlling their fertility.

Nevertheless, it's possible that the easy availability of Norplant would heighten the atmosphere of sexuality that already permeates the teen subculture. If that were the only consideration, one might conclude Norplant should be discouraged. But there is an important element left out of this calculation: Norplant's impact on abortions and out-of-wedlock births.

Abortion and Illegitimacy

EACH YEAR, there are about one million pregnancies among teenagers. About 40 per cent end in abortions and 10 per cent end in miscarriages. Some 60 per cent of those that go to term (that is, 30 per cent of all teen pregnancies) result in a baby being born out of wedlock—the first step toward welfare dependency.

Abortion. About 1.6 million abortions are performed each year. Over 400,000—or a quarter of the total—are on teenagers. Teenagers as a whole have higher abortion rates than older women, with older teens reporting the highest rate of any age group. In 1988, the abortion rate for 18- to 19-year-olds was 62 per thousand women of that age group, compared to 27 per thousand among all women ages 15 to 44. The rate for 15- to 17-year-olds, at 31 per thousand, was half that of older teens but still higher than the rate for all women of childbearing age.

In the 11 years between 1973 and 1984, the teenage abortion rate almost doubled, from about 24 to about 44 per thousand females ages 15 to 19, according to the Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI). (Between 1984 and 1988, the rate stablized.)

Out-of-wedlock births. Over one million children are born out of wedlock each year. That is about 27 per cent of all births. Although the proportion of black children born out of wedlock is three times that of whites, the white rate has steadily increased over the last thirty years, so that there are now more white babies born out of wedlock than black ones.

"I'm declaring a war on poverty—all of you who make under $6,000 a year are under arrrest."

Over 300,000 babies were born to unwed teenagers in 1988. That's three-fifths of all births to teenagers. Although the total number of births to teenagers declined between 1970 and 1988, the percentage born out of wedlock more than doubled (from 29 per cent to 65 per cent), and the teenage out-of-wedlock birth rate increased by two-thirds (from about 22 per thousand to 37 per thousand). Over 10,000 babies were born to children under 15 years old.

Arguments about Murphy Brown notwithstanding, the plain fact is that having a baby out of wedlock as a teenager is the surest road to long-term welfare dependency. About 50 per cent of all teen mothers are on welfare within one year of the birth of their first child; 77 per cent are on within five years, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Nick Zill of Child Trends, Inc., calculates that 43 per cent of long-term welfare recipients (on the rolls for ten years or more) started their families as unwed teens.

While many women want to have the babies they have, many do not—as witnessed by those high abortion rates. In fact, many abortion patients report that they were trying to prevent pregnancy at the time they conceived. A 1987 AGI study of abortion patients found that more than half were practicing birth control during the month in which they got pregnant. Only 9 per cent reported that they never used a contraceptive.

Many people see the disproportionate number of out-of-wedlock pregnancies among the poor as a sign that they live by different moral standards. But while middle-class teens are still somewhat less sexually active (though the gap is narrowing), the real difference is that they are better contraceptors.

Poor women of all races report higher overall levels of contraceptive failure. In 1988, 27 per cent of poor teens reported a condom failure while 13 per cent reported a pill failure, compared to 13 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively, for non-poor teens. Similar patterns hold for older women.

By now, the many ways that condoms can fail, through nonuse as well as misuse, should be well known. But people may not understand how so many women who claim to be on the pill become pregnant. In fact, the modern pill contains much lower dosages of estrogen and progesterone than did those of the 1960s and 1970s. While these newer pills cause significantly fewer side effects than earlier versions, they also require more precise use. Missing just one day puts a woman at risk of pregnancy. Missing more days is an invitation to pregnancy, as Patty Aleman, a nurse practitioner at the Capital Women's Center relates. "One college freshman came in for an abortion and said she was taking the pill. When I pressed her about it, she said, 'Well, I did miss three days.'"

The life circumstances of many women are not consistent with maintaining this kind of daily routine. Virginia Cartoof, a former social worker in inner-city Boston, found that many of her teenage clients lived in crowded households where pills got lost. Often, there was no money to replace them

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immediately. Others did not always spend the night in the same place, and would forget to take their pills along.

Norplant avoids all these problems. With Norplant, there is no need for women to remember a daily pill or a barrier method at each act of intercourse. They need not go to a doctor to get a prescription when they initiate a new relationship. And they cannot easily discontinue use. Susan Davis, a contraception counselor at a Washington, D.C., Planned Parenthood clinic, agrees. "The biggest market for Norplant is former pill users," she says. "A former pill user told me, 'I had an abortion and I really don't want to get pregnant again.' She is now using Norplant."

The association between poverty and poor life prospects on the one side, and too early sex and unwise childbearing on the other, is too obvious to ignore. Elijah Anderson notes, "Most middle-class youths take a stronger interest in their future and know what a pregnancy can do to derail it. In contrast, many [inner-city] adolescents see no future to derail—hence they see little to lose by having a child out of wedlock." Because those young people who have the most to look forward to are the most responsible about their sexual practices (and are least likely to be sexually active), it is not too much of an exaggeration to say that good education and real opportunities in life are the best contraceptives. But until those ideals are achieved, Norplant is an important option.

It is true that, for younger teens especially, abstinence is the best goal of social policy. But the harsh fact is that we have neither the social will nor the practical tools to achieve it. Meanwhile, each year teenagers have another 400,000 abortions and 300,000 babies out of wedlock.

Where does all this bring us? Norplant's very effectiveness would lead to a marginal increase in sexual activity among teens, and thus to a concomitant increase in sexually transmitted diseases (which Norplant does not prevent). But on the other side of the social ledger, widespread use of Norplant would sharply reduce the number of abortions and babies born out of wedlock. This is the tradeoff that Norplant offers.

Neuhaus criticized this choice as "moral defeatism." Perhaps he is right. But sometimes the moral life requires one to swallow hard and choose the lesser of two evils. Which is worse: the possibility of a marginal increase in sexual activity? Or losing the opportunity to reduce abortions and out-of-wedlock births by 10, 20, or even 30 per cent? To ask the question is to answer it. □

A BETTER CHOICE

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

MR. BESHAROV asks us, "Which is worse: the possibility of a marginal increase in sexual activity? Or losing the opportunity to reduce abortions and out-of-wedlock births by 10, 20, or even 30 per cent? To ask the question is to answer it." I have asked the question, and it is by no means answered. The alternatives he poses are misleading.

Given the figure of a million teenage pregnancies, a 10 per cent reduction by the use of Norplant would require 100,000 implantations. In either case, it's an ambitious program. Presumably the program is voluntary and hundreds of thousands of teenage girls (the proposal does put all the responsibility on the girls) would want to have a minor surgical procedure that would contraceptively equip them for sexual intercourse. Presumably also, the parents would have some say in this and would agree to having their daughters thus equipped. Presumably yet further, one result would be "the possibility of a marginal increase in sexual activity."

I suggest that the result would be the near certainty of a *substantial* increase in sexual intercourse among teenagers. If so, that would mean also an increase in abortions and single-parent children. The problems that the proposal intends to resolve would be greatly exacerbated.

Of course we do not know for sure until it is tried. There are many perilous things that should not be tried. We should not under public auspices try implanting Norplant in teenage girls. To do so would be to try something that possibly no society has tried before: to state publicly that there are no social standards or sanctions with respect to the sexual activity of young people. It might be objected that we are already making that statement by distributing condoms in public schools. Just so. Which is why condom distribution is a dumb idea, and far from settled policy in most schools.

Mr. Besharov says that abstinence is the best goal "for younger teens especially." (At 15 you can't do it but at 16 you can?) He adds, "But the harsh fact is that we have neither the social will nor the practical tools to achieve [the goal of abstinence]." I do not know what he means by "practical tools," but presumably we do have means of discouraging and encouraging certain behaviors among young people. Parents have never succeeded in controlling totally the behavior of their children, which is just as well. But if Mr. Besharov is suggesting that parents—and churches and schools—should give up on discouraging sexual promiscuity and encouraging abstinence, his is even more of a counsel of despair than I had at first thought.

The critical reference is to "social will." To whom, one may ask, belong the wills that make up this social will? Teenagers, parents, brothers, sisters, pastors, teachers, school boards, aunts, and uncles—each, one by one, can have a will with respect to teenage sexuality. Or perhaps the suggestion is that most people who are in a position to influence teenagers really do not care about what they do sexually. The survey research data do not support that suggestion. But even if most people did not care, that does not mean that we should adopt public policies premised upon not caring. Mr. Besharov cares. He obviously cares about abortion and out-of-wedlock children, and by implication he cares

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about teenage fornication (he calls it an evil). I have never met the "social will," but I have met many people who care very much about their childrens' sexual behavior.

Just Not Right

BUT MR. Besharov, along with many others, is discouraged about the possibility of encouraging abstinence from sexual intercourse. The discouragement is understandable. As I wrote in the first article, many in the media, entertainment, and educational establishments proclaim that abstinence is unnatural, chastity is unattainable, and virginity is a form of sexual deviance. And yet, in such a social climate, at least one half of teenage girls are virgins. It seems quite remarkable. Many in the other half have had sex only once or twice, while many more, those who have been very "sexually active," know that what they have done is not right.

Let us stipulate for argument's sake that 25 per cent of teenage girls are sexually promiscuous and think there is nothing wrong with that. Why should we agree with them by adopting policies that declare that the sexual behavior of young people is a matter of public indifference? Why should we not, rather, encourage the 75 per cent who want to do the right thing, even if they do not always behave as they know they ought? When it comes to doing the right thing, incentives and disincentives are always in fragile balance. Those who want to do the right thing need all the support that they can get. Girls in particular need support in resisting predatory males.

Consider 16-year-old Thelma who has her Norplant in place. Her reasons for saying no are sharply reduced. She is equipped for sex. Her school and, presumably, her parents have said that they *expect* her to have sexual intercourse. Saying no seems arbitrary, irrational, and downright unfriendly. If through public policy we declare that we expect teenagers to be sexually promiscuous, that it is the normal thing, it is reasonable to suppose that more teenagers will be sexually promiscuous. If, on the other hand, we make it clear that we expect abstinence, chastity, and self-command, virtue might be given a helping hand.

Or we can give up. We can, perhaps implicitly but with powerful social effect, agree with the minority (maybe the small minority) of teenagers who are sexually promiscuous and think there is nothing wrong with that. But, it might be objected, Norplant would be used selectively. It would not be a general statement of approval with respect to teenage promiscuity since it would be given only to those girls who already are "sexually active."

Anyone who takes that objection seriously has been on a long vacation from American reality. Norplant would be administered, as it is said, on a non-discriminatory basis, meaning there is no room for discriminations between good and bad, right and wrong. There must be, as policy guidelines would make clear, no "judgmental" connotation attached to getting a Norplant—the rules of self esteem require that. In sum, great effort would be expended in making sure it is understood that Norplant and the sexual promiscuity it is intended to facilitate are perfectly acceptable.

To be sure, many Americans think it is more acceptable for "their" teenagers than for ours. The racist caricature of inner-city black teenagers as incorrigibly rutting animals is no part of Mr. Besharov's argument, but it is an undeniable part of the public discussion of Norplant, condom distribution, and related policies. Those who live at the bottom margin of society, where the fragility of behavioral norms is most pronounced, are most in need of encouragement. What they do not need is a message from the larger society, conveyed through public policies such as the use of Norplant, that nothing better is expected of them.

There are other considerations that Mr. Besharov does not address adequately. He touches all too lightly, for example, on the epidemic of venereal diseases (now called sexually transmitted diseases or STDs). Some 65 per cent of STDs are found among teenagers, some of them resulting in sterility or even in death. Norplant is of no help in resisting STDs, and the sexual behavior that it facilitates is the very means of infection. Mr. Besharov also neglects the documented relationship between sexual promiscuity among teenagers and failing grades, drug and alcohol abuse, increased suicide rates, and other "at-risk" behavior. The entire society has a large stake in teenagers growing up to form stable and healthy marriages. Policies that have the effect of "normalizing" promiscuity make that goal much less likely.

Mr. Besharov notes the explosion of abortion rates after the 1973 *Roe* decision. Abortion is legal, many thought, therefore abortion is all right and therefore abortion rates soared. But policies and their consequences can move in other directions. For instance, we know that, in states that require parental consent for abortion, both teenage abortion rates and teenage pregnancy rates fall dramatically. What changes once can be changed again. "Each year," Mr. Besharov writes, "teenagers have another 400,000 abortions and 300,000 babies out of wedlock." There is nothing inevitable about that. It was not the case 25 years ago and it need not be the case ten years from now.

The Norplant proposal leans in one direction, aiming to contain the damage of the allegedly inevitable, and I suggest we should lean in the other, determined to reduce both abortions and out-of-wedlock births by challenging the sexual license that is the source of both. □

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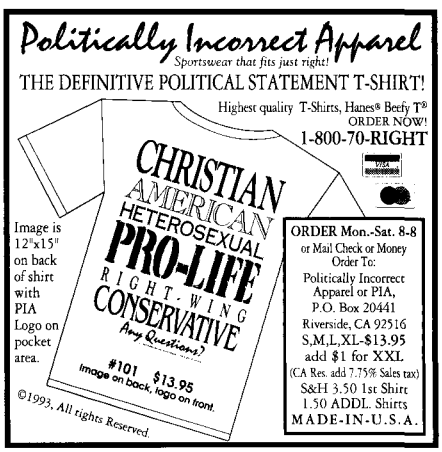

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THE VICE PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON

July 19, 1993

Dear Rusty,

Guess where I am!

The Vice President's Official Residence. That's right. Tipper, the girls, Al Jr., and I finally moved into the Naval Observatory, and I'll be totally honest with you—it's quite a step up from Tipper's dad's place in Virginia, where we were living. For one thing, it's got a bigger yard, though I plan to turn most of that into a water-sensitive "drought garden." Also, it's a lot nearer the office, and with my task of re-inventing government moving to the front burner, there are plenty of late nights, committee meetings, task-force panels, speeches, and press briefings in my future. So it's much easier on me—and of course on the ozone layer—not to have such a long commute.

Right now I'm lying flat on my back in the basement, dictating this letter into a small tape recorder. We're having a heck of a heat wave up here, Rusty. And although the Naval Observatory is equipped with air conditioning (I know, I know—but they didn't ask me; blame the Quayles) I am discouraging Tipper and the kids from using it. Just this morning I said, "Kids, Tip, what's it going to be? The ozone layer or an artificially cool house?" I'm proud to say they came through. In fact, one of the girls reminded me that the basement was naturally the coolest part of the house, and I led the way down with the family right behind me. But then one of the maids must have opened a window, because all of a sudden a draft blew the basement door shut behind me, and of course the door sticks in this humidity, so I'm down here alone in the cool, damp basement, while Tip and the kids are sweltering upstairs. Poor them! When they finally unstick this door, you can bet I'll be the envy of the family!

It's nice down here, though. Quiet. And after the past week, believe me, I need it.

I'm not sure how much news you get down there, but in case you haven't heard, huge parts of the Midwest are almost completely under water—they have had about a month of solid rain in some places along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, and Bill, HRC, and I have declared a state of emergency for most of the area.

I flew out to Grafton, Illinois, on Monday to survey the damage. It was heartbreaking. On the way there, on Air Force Two, David Gergen called me from Tokyo.

"So you're going to tour the flooded area, Mr. Vice President?" he asked.

"That's right," I answered.

"Terrific, terrific."

"You bet," I said. "And it's a great time to bring up why we're having such torrential rains. It's all that hair spray creating the greenhouse effect which melts the polar icecap. I predicted this in my book, Earth in the Balance, remember."

The line kind of went dead for a second.

"Mr. Vice President?"

"Yes, Dave?"

"You know what? In the light of the new centrist tone we're trying to take in the Administration, maybe you'd better just soft-pedal the whole environmental angle. People who're watching their houses destroyed by floods don't want to hear that it's because they use too much deodorant."

I saw his point. But later that day, as I was touring the flooded area, a reporter asked me if I attributed all the rain to the greenhouse effect. I couldn't lie to the man, Rusty. So I nodded.

"But Mr. Vice President," he asked, "don't you blame the California drought on the greenhouse effect?"

I saw where he was going.

"Yes, I do," I said. "In my book, Earth in the Balance."

"Well, which is it? Does the greenhouse effect cause drought or flood?"

"This is a centrist Administration," I replied. "We can have it both ways."

I don't like to brag, Rusty, but I think I handled that guy pretty well. I made a mental note to send a clip of that to Gergen. Sometimes I think he needs to be reminded that he's not the only centrist in this Administration.

Flying back home on Monday, Air Force Two flew low over the flooded plains. It was heartbreaking, Rusty. Miles and miles of farmland under water, houses destroyed, tent villages dotting the landscape —a truly tragic sight.

And I know I'm not supposed to think this way, and I know it's something I shouldn't say out loud, but as we were flying over all that marshy, swampy, flooded river country all I could think was: wetlands. Look at all the precious wetlands.

I wonder if we should be preserving them?

Gotta go! The family just slipped a few carrots under the door!

All the best, Al

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The Living and the Dead

ROBERT H. BORK

POLITICAL THEORY sometimes seems an intellectual parlor game, an arena for academic poseurs, with little or no relevance to political reality. Isaiah Berlin remarked that this century's history was massively shaped by "the great ideological storms that have altered the lives of virtually all mankind: the Russian Revolution and its aftermath—totalitarian tyrannies of both Right and Left and the explosions of nationalism, racism, and, in places, of religious bigotry, which, interestingly enough, not one among the most perceptive social thinkers of the nineteenth century had ever predicted."

Worse still, many twentieth-century philosophers, even in the face of those calamaties, go on building airy liberal-egalitarian models for society without apparently noticing that actual societies show no inclination to conform to the models. As the Commu-

Post-Liberalism: Studies in Political Thought, by John Gray (Routledge, 352 pp., $45)

nist world shatters, so too do many of the nations newly freed from its tyranny. Ethnic and religious hatreds and slaughters abound in Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe, and the end is nowhere in sight. It seems certain that soon some of the most vicious regimes on earth will have nuclear weapons capable of reaching our allies and, not long afterward, ourselves.

Ethnic and racial hatreds, though not yet slaughters, are rising even in the democracies of the West. The state of public contentment with Western political leadership may be seen in the fact that Bill Clinton's miserable approval ratings are nevertheless among the highest of the leaders of the G-7 countries. In the Western industrialized democracies, government has grown so intrusive and expensive that economic growth, a necessity for social peace, falters or declines while national debt due to the welfare state grows uncontrollably, taking us toward bankruptcy. The thirst for equality of results, especially in the United States, steadily diminishes not only productivity but personal freedoms. If any major trends provide reason for cheerfulness about our immediate future, they are quite well disguised.

Katherine Trunk

Much of the blight in our domestic affairs flows directly from the state of contemporary liberalism, and it is said there is cause for hope in the obtrusive fact that that outlook is intellectually bankrupt. So, one supposes, was the animating philosophy of the Mongol Empire. Bankrupt enterprises can survive and do extensive damage for long periods, as the Soviet Union did, and that is probably particularly true when the bankruptcy in question is merely intellectual. I use the word "merely" advisedly. Though the inmates of universities and think tanks keep telling themselves that ideas are ultimately decisive, it is not true that the better ideas invariably win out in the political marketplace. Ideas, or moods posing as ideas, that become dominant are decisive, but their coherence, as a philosopher would define that, may have little to do with their popular acceptance.

The question naturally arises: What, then, is the use of political philosophy? A persuasive answer is given in John Gray's latest book, *Post-Liberalism: Studies in Political Thought*. The title stirs hope. If there is anything I feel ready for it is a post-liberal era. But the book itself dispels any such euphoria.

Mr. Gray, a fellow of Jesus College, Oxford, has collected a number of his recent essays, apparently disparate but connected by an overall theme. In the first section, "Thinkers," he examines the merits of the philosophies of Thomas Hobbes, George Santayana, Friedrich Hayek, Michael Oakeshott, James Buchanan, and Isaiah Berlin. "Critiques," the second section, consists of essays about Marxism, totalitarianism, the post-totalitarian attempt to construct a civil society in the former Soviet Union, the forms of liberalism, and much more. "Questions," the final section, takes up the politics of cultural diversity, conservatism, and the political thought of the New Right, and concludes with a new essay entitled "What Is Dead and What Is Living in Liberalism?" Though all the essays are rich with insights, this last one caps the major theme that holds the book together.

What is dead is liberal political philosophy as practiced by John Stuart Mill and his intellectual heirs. What is living, though in most cases badly damaged and certainly endangered, is liberal institutions and practices. This living liberalism is not the modern, authoritarian variety exemplified by the left wing of the Democratic Party but the classical version, to which much of modern liberalism is hostile and much of modern conservatism is friendly. The answer, then, to the question, Of what use is political philosophy? is that there is little enough in the attempts to construct overarching systems to be found in the writings of Mill, John Rawls, Robert Nozick, and Ronald Dworkin. Such attempts to establish liberalisms—of whatever variety, classical or modern—as uni-

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versal prescriptions founder on any realistic look at the facts of the world in which we live. This project of liberalism is doomed and we would do well to abandon it, for it is worse than useless, it is harmful. The political philosophizing that remains useful relates to the understanding, preservation, and improvement of the liberal civil society which is ours in the West by inheritance, and largely by historical accident. Theory should, therefore, address the actual institutions and practices of the liberal societies of the West. This is not to say that those societies are undergirded by irrefutable philosophy but that the ways of life they allow are ours, we have come to value them, and we would feel impoverished if we lost them.

The liberal philosophical enterprise, by contrast, was and is to demonstrate by abstract theorizing that Western-style liberal societies are superior to all other societies, past, existing, or imaginable, and therefore present the model to which the world must ultimately come. Moreover, these societies themselves must be altered to fit more closely the theoretical model. There is in this, of course, a strong authoritarian impulse, since actual societies are not likely to conform themselves to some philosopher's dream without coercion by government. In its extreme form, this coercion in the pursuit of a dream results in Stalinism. In milder forms, it resembles President Clinton's attempt to remake America according to notions concocted in the bull sessions of 1960s student radicals.

MR. GRAY identifies the four philosophic elements of the "liberal syndrome" as "moral or normative individualism" (the idea that ultimate value lies only in the states of mind, feeling, or lives of individuals), "universalism" (the idea that certain rights inhere in all human beings and that every political institution is to be judged by the degree to which it secures the specified rights), "meliorism" (the idea that human institutions may be improved indefinitely through critical reason), and "egalitarianism" (the idea that, because all humans are morally equal, hierarchy and authority require an ethical defense).

Mr. Gray's argument that philosophy can establish none of these elements as having universal authority borrows from Isaiah Berlin's demonstration that ultimate values often conflict with one another, and that there are bound to be conflicts even within values. The value of liberty, for example, is not monolithic because claimed liberties often, perhaps always, conflict with one another. Nor can such conflicts be resolved by any overarching standard, and so ultimate values are uncombinable in a single society. Thus, according to Berlin, "the ancient ideal, common to many cultures and especially to that of the Enlightenment, of a perfect society in which all true ends are reconciled, is conceptually incoherent." The resultant "objective pluralism" and "value incommensurability" means that there is no single good life and certainly no single conception or model of a good society. There are many varieties of "human flourishing," which seems to be Gray's ultimate value. But if there are many ways for humans to flourish, as no doubt there are, then it is not demonstrable that individual feeling must always trump collective claims, that there can be a specified list of rights against which all societies must be measured, that critical reason can always identify "progress" as between two cultures, or that egalitarianism is a requirement of a good society.

The demonstration that the philosophic, though not the practical, project of liberalism is impossible in a society of multiple visions of the good life is immensely valuable in itself, and perhaps it will turn some of the academic theorists to socially more useful pursuits, such as becoming tax lawyers, where their metaphysical casuistries would be more appropriate. But the same conclusion might have been reached empirically by the observation that none of the liberal philosophers has ever succeeded in constructing a system with which all men of good faith must agree. If, after a couple of centuries, very powerful minds have not succeeded, there is strong reason to suspect that success is impossible. Of course, that is not entirely satisfactory, just as it was not entirely satisfactory that Fermat's Last Theorem held true for all numbers tried in computer calculations. Mathematicians' excitement and satisfaction were reserved for the apparent theoretical demonstration that FLT must be true for all numbers. So it is with the demonstration that liberal philosophizing of the grand, overarching variety is false in all its manifestations.

Gray's ultimate value, "human flourishing," is a concept not much developed in this book, though most of us probably have a tolerably clear idea of what he means. He is quite clear, however, that for us in the West, human flourishing can occur only within a "civil society." That concept is developed. "A civil society is one which is tolerant of the diversity of views, religious and political, that it contains, and in which the state does not seek to impose on all any comprehensive doctrine." Second, both the government and its subjects are constrained by the rule of law, which implies limited government so that most social and economic activities will be independent of government. Third, it is essential that the institution of private property be protected and that economic activity proceed through market institutions, though not necessarily through capitalist corporations.

Gray himself, however, gives reasons to think that civil society as so defined may be unlikely to survive. A major reason is the emergence in our time of mass democracy in which political competition thrusts the government into ever more aspects of our economic and social lives. The result is what he calls the "Hobbesian state," an omnipresent government which does not rescue men from the brutal competition of the state of nature but which is itself the arena for such competition as interest groups combat one another for the levers and rewards of state power. This seems to me fairly to describe the situation of the United States today, which suggests that the institutions and practices of civil society are in sharp decline and their existence probably imperiled.

It may seem unlikely that our government will refuse to tolerate the varieties of views prevalent in the United States or attempt to impose any comprehensive view of its own. The major instance in which the state, through the Supreme Court, may be said to be attempting something of the sort is in the banishment of religion and religious symbolism from our public life. As government reaches further and further into our lives, carrying the Court's misinterpretation of the religion clauses of the First Amendment with it, secularization becomes the official view. There may be worse to

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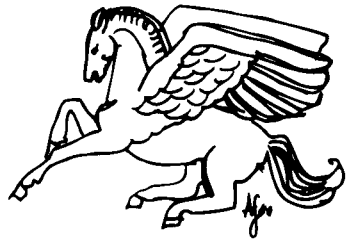
come. Political correctness is no longer confined to campuses, and some subjects (e.g., homosexual rights, affirmative action) may soon become almost undiscussable. Though government will not command any such result, it is leading the way, the actual coercion being moral and already accepted by many private institutions.

The rule of law, the institutions of private property, and the coordination of economic activities by the market seem less healthy. No one of that trio is highly regarded in the universities, and large segments of the intellectual world are actively hostile. All three are damaged every day by the proliferation of administrative agencies that govern us under broad, often meaningless, delegations of power from Congress and state legislatures. Agency discretion is only minimally constrained by the courts. The rule of law is also threatened by the politicization of judicial decision-making. The Warren Court, for example, is routinely cited by liberal elites as the very epitome of what a court should be. But the Warren Court was notable precisely for its contempt for law and the imposition of its own views not only on the Constitution but on antitrust and patent statutes, labor law, indeed on any body of law where an ideological opportunity presented itself.

That attitude is prevalent among too many Justices and judges today. Ronald Reagan and George Bush sought, with only partial success, to correct it by appointing judges who would respect law as having its own integrity—a view now widely denigrated as producing "conservative ideologues"—but Bill Clinton clearly intends to repoliticize the bench along liberal lines. It turns out that the morality of process, which is what judicial restraint is about, is no match for the morality of results as judicial activists define that morality.

The prospects of limited government are not particularly bright either. In the United States the courts have long since given up enforcement of limits on federal power, and calls for rejuvenating the Tenth Amendment are merely plaintive laments of conservative nostalgia. Edward Banfield has shown that the idea of a national government limited to its enumerated powers was doomed from the outset because Americans do not want such restraints and, sooner or later, the political branches will get the kind of judges they want. The growth of mass democracy and the brutal competition of interest groups within the Hobbesian state ensures that government will never again limit the spheres of its claimed competence. Gray mentions the possibility of a balanced-budget amendment, but that, too, is a conservative chimera. There would be no way to enforce such an amendment except by turning the budget over to the federal courts, which would continually be ruling on fiscal years long gone by.

Though Gray's is an urgent plea for the preservation of civil society, he sees that the prospects are gloomy. He thinks that the "likely course of the coming century . . . virtually inevitably will encompass fundamentalist convulsions, near-apocalyptic ecological catastrophes, Malthusian wars, and the spread of technologies of mass destruction in an increasingly anarchic world." Nor does danger exist only abroad. He speaks of "the prospect of a slow decline in our own civil societies, as traditional practices of law and civil association are eroded by the inordinate demands of abstract conceptions of equality and rights."



> [I]f civil society is among us in danger, it is in virtue precisely of the hubris of fundamental liberalism—the liberalism of those (such as Ackerman, the early Nozick and Rawls, or Dworkin) who seek to use the hallucinatory perspectives of uncritical philosophy to distract us from the practice of liberty. We are not far from the point at which the mass availability of hubristic philosophy imposes impossible strains on the institutions and practices from which it illicitly derives all its genuine content.

The danger is "the corrosion of liberal practices by liberal ideology."

To those unacquainted with the academic world, this may seem an overblown statement of the danger. But the state of our universities is such that there is "mass availability" of the sort of philosophy Gray attacks. Students may not retain the details of such theorizing, but they do retain the attitudes taught. They come away fixated with vulgar conceptions of "equality" and "rights," and hence vulnerable to rhetoric of that sort. A friend assures me that all is well because the inanities of the academic Left are creating conservative students. There is such an effect, to be sure, but it seems heavily outweighed by the creation of left liberals. The results may be seen everywhere: in the media, in the churches, in the entertainment industry, and in our politics.

But, Gray correctly contends, matters in the United States are worse than that. "The legalist turn in recent American liberal thought has predictably deleterious consequences . . . In political contexts, it has generated a series of intractable conflicts, which portend deepening division, growing ungovernability, and even a sort of chronic, low-intensity civil war." Standards of argument have been debauched and "[c]omplex questions about restraint of liberty—such questions as the control of pornography, and the termination of life in abortion and euthanasia—that in other countries, and other traditions of liberal discourse, are treated as issues in legislative policy, involving a balance of interests and sometimes a compromise of ideals, have come to be treated in the United States, primarily or exclusively, as questions of fundamental rights."

This is much the same point made by Mary Ann Glendon in *Rights Talk: The Impoverishment of Political Discourse*. Anyone who has heard Kate Michelman's argument for "freedom of choice" knows that the beginning, middle, and end consist of the assertion that abortion is a "woman's fundamental right." When someone on the other side simply says "murder," political discourse is not merely debauched but abolished.

Sadly, the phenomenon John Gray and Mary Ann Glendon identify may be an almost inevitable effect of the American Bill of Rights, which, in our time, exerts a constant pressure toward less and less restrained individualism and personal autonomy. The guarantees of the Bill of Rights symbolize freedom and there are no counter symbols in the Constitution; or, if the political powers conferred there are taken as (weak) counter symbols, it is clear that they are over-

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ridden both in law and in prestige by the idea of freedom from legal restraint.

This is not solely because the Bill of Rights is the primary vehicle the law provides for judicial power and human nature tempts judges constantly to expand that power, which means, of course, constantly expanding the area of individual autonomy at the expense of the legitimate claims of the community. More than that, some judges and their academic acolytes cannot resist seeing the Bill of Rights as flowing from a moral and political philosophy which the written guarantees do not fully express. By a leap of logic, it becomes the judge's duty, or at least his option, to discern that more complete philosophy and to fill out the law by finding and enforcing new rights. This was precisely and explicitly the process by which *Griswold* v. *Connecticut* invented the "right of privacy," which led to *Roe* v. *Wade*, which led to the new "right of personal dignity and autonomy" announced by three Justices in *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*, which will lead to God knows what.

The whole technique is ahistorical, since the Bill of Rights neither derives from nor implies philosophic reasoning about the proper sphere of individual autonomy but is rather an expression of historical experience (the Third Amendment's prohibition of quartering troops in private homes except in time of war) or fear of what the new federal power might do (the First Amendment's prohibition of a congressional establishment of religion). But the legalism of modern liberal thought means that the broader philosophy of ever more extensive autonomy spills over into our intellectual and political arenas.

There is an associated force for decline that Gray does not much deal with: the unrestrained individualism and moral relativism that are rampant in our culture and most visible in popular culture. Indeed, he seems a bit complacent on this subject: "None of the manifestations of contemporary decadence about which conventional conservative opinion is so alarmed are threats to the survival of society." In this, he seems both somewhat inconsistent and wrong. In another book, *Liberalism*, Gray speaks of the "vital truth that the maintenance of moral and cultural traditions is a necessary condition of lasting progress," and in this book he states that the culture of individualism is "threatened, especially in the United States, by a left-liberalism which regards the undergirding institutions of liberal civil society—marriage, private property, and so forth—as constraints upon, and not as conditions of, individual freedom."

It may be wondered, moreover, whether a healthy political culture or a viable civil society can be maintained by a people increasingly given to the pursuit of instant and endless titillation, a people who think that only the self matters and that the individual's right to define himself and choose his pleasures without hindrance is virtually absolute. Not only are undergirding institutions, such as marriage, threatened, but the self-discipline essential to productive work, both intellectual and physical, is likely to decline, and the self-restraint essential to healthy political and judicial institutions is likely to be in short supply. This is a decadence that has been growing for a very long time, though it accelerated and became blatant in the 1960s. Individualism lies at the heart of prosperity and freedom in the West, but individualism without limits is antipathetical to both.

Gray may be largely right that there is little government can do directly about this decadence—he cites Wittgenstein's remark that seeking deliberately to shore up an ailing tradition is like trying to repair a broken spider's web with one's bare hands—but that does not mean that nothing should be tried or that government has no role. Elsewhere, Gray notes that both the English and the American varieties of individualism were sustained for so long because they were not merely liberal but were more properly called "authoritarian individualism," dependent on a "nexus of beliefs, practices, and inhibitions which conferred legitimacy and constrained the corrosive tendencies . . . of the anonymity and moral laxity that were latent in individualist life." James Q. Wilson has written, "In the mid nineteenth century England and America reacted to the consequences of industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and affluence by asserting an ethos of self-control, whereas in the late twentieth century they reacted to many of the same forces by asserting an ethos of self-expression."

A primary, though not the only, constraint in both countries in the last century was religious tradition. There is still a strong religious strain in the United States, and modern liberals, recognizing the danger that strain poses to their agenda, try to discredit it by speaking of the "religious Right." Religious conservatives are no particular threat to anything other than the prevailing mood of moral relativism. The problem with relying upon religion today is that there are not enough religious conservatives and that much mainstream religion has been largely secularized, so that it often becomes the ally of left-liberalism.

It remains to be seen, therefore, whether an ethos of self-control can be reinstituted in some other way, by some other means, since betting on the chances of a religious revival does not seem a particularly astute strategy. A revival may come or it may not, but there is a secular language of morality and we must be prepared to use it despite the ridicule, and cries of danger, to be anticipated from the elites of modern liberalism. Moral intimidation is their favorite tactic. Political philosophers like John Gray expose the Left's pretensions and help us put the debate on the grounds most favorable to the preservation of our liberties. □

False Alarm

RICHARD PIPES

WALTER LAQUEUR is a modern historian distinguished by an extraordinary range of interests. He has written on the rise of Zionism and the Holocaust, on Russo-German relations and post-Stalinist Russia, on the student revolts of the 1960s, on the contemporary Middle East, on guerrillas and terrorism, on Nasser's Egypt and Weimar Germany. He has also published an autobiography and a novel. The catalogue of the Harvard University library lists 105 entries under his

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name. Everything he writes displays keen understanding and sound judgment.

Yet there is a danger in such breadth and productivity. His intelligence rarely leads him astray, but it cannot save him from occasional superficiality. It takes more time than he is willing to allot to any one subject to penetrate its mysteries. A historian who writes so quickly on so many unrelated subjects of necessity has to rely on secondary literature—or must turn to research assistants, who see with their own eyes, not his.

Black Hundred, his latest book, displays the strengths and weaknesses of Laqueur's work. It is a pioneering analysis of the "Red–Brown coalition"—an alliance of die-hard Communists and native fascists—which has emerged in the open since the breakdown of the Soviet Union with the declared intention of subverting its democratic successor government. The research in contemporary sources, including ephemeral and often virtually unobtainable newspapers, is impressive, but much of it is the product of staff work: in the introduction the author thanks six research assistants, one of whom, Valeri Solovei, he credits with having co-authored several sections of the book.

Familiar as he is with the history of Russian political thought, Laqueur does not provide a satisfactory account of the antecedents of the contemporary right-wing movement. Russian conservatism, whose origins date to the eighteenth century, always had two distinct strains. One consisted of persons who espoused liberal objectives

Black Hundred: The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia, by Walter Laqueur (HarperCollins, 317 pp., $27.50)

but felt that the country's cultural backwardness required that they be striven for gradually, under the aegis of strong state authority. The other wanted unrestrained state power both to thwart the forces of change and to assert Great Russian hegemony at home and abroad. The "Black Hundreds" of the book's title were protofascist thugs whom the latter employed to intimidate dissenters and non-Russian inhabitants of the empire, especially Jews.

In Part One of this book, Laqueur confuses the two groups, treating them as one. He lumps Karamzin and Struve, committed liberal conservatives (both, incidentally, philo-Semites) with the admirers of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and the instigators of pogroms. The Slavophiles, who originally were Romantic nationalists, are also discussed as forerunners of the Russian fascists, although even after having degenerated into xenophobic reactionaries, they did not preach mindless violence. They had no more in common with the murderous gangs of Russia than Nietzsche has to do with the German skinheads who assault Turkish immigrants.

Vekhi, an influential symposium published in 1909 by conservative thinkers (several of them ex-Marxists as well as Jews), is in one place misidentified as concerned with the alienation between the state and people, and mentioned side by side with Dostoevsky's reactionary anti-Semitism. In another part of the book it is correctly identified as indicative of concern with the irresponsible behavior of the intelligentsia. In any event, it had no connection with the xenophobia of the Black Hundreds, either then or today.

The bulk of the book details the activities and theories of Russian nationalists, first in emigration and then in post-Communist Russia. The purpose of this material is to warn of the danger of the collapse of Russia's fragile democracy and the possible triumph of an "authoritarian system based on some nationalist populism."

It would be foolhardy to deny that the danger exists. Russia has no shortage of fanatics who dream of a "strong hand" capable of restoring Russia's empire and once again inspiring awe in foreigners. They espouse a totalitarian ideology common to fascism and Communism, and can count on some

Mr. Pipes is a professor of history at Harvard University.

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by Kevin R. Baker

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support from those who have suffered the most from the disappearance of the totalitarian welfare state, namely the elderly and the least educated. Even so, it is questionable whether these elements really represent a major danger either to Russia or to the West.

The fact is that the nationalist Right in Russia, vociferous as it is, has not fared well. *Pamyat*, its best-organized party, failed in 1989 to win a single seat in elections to the Congress of Peoples' Deputies. The Councils of National Salvation, set up in 1991 to take over, proved impotent.

Public-opinion polls indicate that a solid majority of Russians favor democracy and the free market. These findings have been confirmed by the April 1993 referendum which gave a plurality to Boris Yeltsin, the *bête noire* of the contemporary far Right. Sociologists estimate that the latter have in Russia a constituency not exceeding 15 per cent of the citizenry, less than similar groups command in France and Italy. The Russian fascists have not been able to mount the kinds of violence against minorities that are daily occurrences in Germany. All this evidence Laqueur ignores, preferring to analyze the ravings of extremist intellectuals. Despite ominous threats to hang Yeltsin and his supporters, no political or racial violence has materialized. Organized crime seems far more powerful than the Black Hundreds.

Laqueur, a refugee from Nazi Germany and an observer of some of the worst atrocities in history, quite naturally assumes the role of a Cassandra. Much of his published work has served to warn a complacent Western public: about the designs of Arab irredentists, about Soviet expansionism, about the dangers of terrorism. His histories expose the folly of wishful thinking. His philosophy of history is consequently permeated with skepticism and pessimism. This has served him well much of the time, but it also tends to blind him to positive developments.

Although he denies that history repeats itself, it is hard to escape the impression that his somber assessment of contemporary Russia is inspired by personal memories of Nazi Germany and knowledge gained from the study of totalitarian regimes. But historical analogies have to be used cautiously. Germany on the eve of Hitler's ascent to power was a country that felt itself stabbed in the back in 1918, humiliated by Versailles in 1919, and finally devastated by a depression. It yearned for a strong hand to solve its problems. Russia, having lived through seventy years of dictatorship, no longer believes it solves anything. Although underpinning Mr. Laqueur's analysis is the fear of Russia re-enacting Germany's tragedy after World War I, it may well turn out that she will model herself on the Germany that emerged from World War II. □

Critic at Half-Mast

TERRY TEACHOUT

THREE years after Edmund Wilson's death in 1972, Farrar, Straus published *The Twenties*, the first of five projected volumes of Wilson's journals. Now *The Sixties* has appeared, closing the circle at last. Like its companion volumes, *The Sixties* contains much of value about Wilson's great contemporaries (W. H. Auden and Isaiah Berlin in particular) and predecessors (it is oddly touching to see the aging polyglot reading *Faust* in the original for the first time, only to find it boring). Just as Wilson's criticism is rooted in his consummate command of the art of literary portraiture, so is *The Sixties* at its best a gallery of marvelously vivid dry-point etchings, some of masters and some of frauds:

Mr. Teachout is writing H. L. Mencken: A Life *and editing* A Second Mencken Chrestomathy.

John Cage was a Fellow [at the Wesleyan Center for Advanced Studies] for a year, and Winslow, the head of the music department, swallowed him hook, line, and sinker. He gave a performance after one of our Monday dinners. I was stupefied—it was a night when beer was served, and I had had two bottles. The last thing that I remember is being given six slips of paper and told to write numbers on them between 1 and 10. I wrote 3 on them all. After that, I went sound asleep, and the only thing I was aware of was the occasional twanging of a string, as in the last act of *The Cherry Orchard*.

Yet I wonder whether the publication *in extenso* of these journals, endlessly readable though they are, has done the best possible service to their author's memory. Certainly to read all five volumes is to come away with an impression of Edmund Wilson very different from that which would have been left by a heavily abridged single-volume edition concentrating more closely on cultural matters. *The Sixties* in particular almost always becomes stupid, even squalid, whenever it strays from the narrow path of art.

Not that this will surprise anyone familiar with Wilson's published writings. His political views, rehashed at length in *The Sixties*, were left-wing in all the most tedious ways. Though profoundly disillusioned by Stalin and his successors, Wilson remained committed to the idiot notion of moral equivalence between the Soviet Union and the United States, which on one memorable occasion he compared to a pair of voracious sea slugs bent on mutual cannibalism. He dismissed the Vietnam War as "disgraceful," doted on grassy-knoll theories of the Kennedy assassination, whooped up George McGovern, and evinced no understanding whatsoever of elementary economics.

One would thus expect Wilson to have had much to say about the effects

The Sixties: The Last Journal, 1960–1972, by Edmund Wilson, edited by Lewis M. Dabney (Farrar, Straus, 968 pp., $35)

of the Sixties on American life and culture. Yet the author of *The Sixties* seems strangely unaware of the Sixties, except insofar as they directly impinge on his daily routine. As editor Lewis M. Dabney (who has done a painstaking job of cleaning up what appears to have been a fairly messy

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text) points out in his introduction, "*The Sixties* lacks the familiar images of the decade—the civil rights movement, student radicals at Berkeley and Columbia, the Watts riots, chaos in the streets at the Democratic convention in Chicago, the Woodstock nation."

But there is one important aspect of the Sixties which is indirectly reflected in the pages of Wilson's journal: its sexual politics. Again, no one familiar with Wilson's published writings will find his consuming interest in sex at all surprising. Especially in *Memoirs of Hecate County*, Wilson reveals himself to have been obsessed with the ins and outs of promiscuity, and we read in *The Sixties* of one lubricious encounter after another. Only 19 pages before the final entry, one stumbles across a detailed account of a late-night coupling in the second-floor lounge of the Princeton Club: "It's strange that now that I'm 75 and can only get an erection at half-mast, two such attractive women as she and Z should offer themselves to me. O. said, 'It's your brain,' but couldn't help giggling, as I did."

Dabney calls this "a romantic escapade . . . at ease and frankly sensual." Others are likely to find it both sordid and inadvertently revealing. Reflexively hostile to religion (he liked to sign letters to old friends "Hiram K. Antichrist," and once blandly assured a correspondent that he made a point of reading *Histoire d'O* aloud to his family every year at Christmas), Wilson sought ultimate meaning in the things of this world, a point of view that has led far better men astray. Mostly it led him deeper and deeper into the world of art; sometimes, though, it enmeshed him in the snares of rationalist cults such as Marxism, and it quite often fooled him into thinking that the search for a transcendent sensuality can be other than vain.

The vanity of human wishes is something Wilson came to recognize at the very end of his life. Not long after his encounter at the Princeton Club, he made this pathetic entry in his journal:

> When I look back, I feel quite definitely divided from my earlier self, who cared about things in a way I no longer do. All that comedy and conflict of human activity—one gets to feel cut off from all that. One cannot even imagine any more the time when one had once participated. One ought perhaps to have died before reaching this point, when one still had the illusion of participating. All that energy expended to peter out! One looks down on an empty arena. What were we all doing there?—running about, jostling and shouting, exchanging vital gossip—involved in great world wars now as trivial and futile as we used to think the Balkan wars were.

Much of *The Sixties*, as this entry suggests, is bound to sadden those who regard Edmund Wilson as one of this century's greatest literary journalists. My own debt to his infectious gusto is all but endless. It was through books like *Classics and Commercials* and *The Bit between My Teeth* that I was first inspired to read Max Beerbohm, Cyril Connolly, Angus Wilson, Kingsley Amis, Maurice Baring, Dawn Powell, Edwin O'Connor, the later Kipling, the Holmes–Laski letters, the Mary Chesnut diaries—the list goes on and on. What other critic, one wonders, has shed lasting light on such wildly dissimilar figures as Abraham Lincoln and George Saintsbury? Even when Wilson was most spectacularly wrong, he never failed to stimulate.

But there is no point in pretending that the man who wrote *Patriotic Gore* was not the same man who thought it important to preserve for posterity a complete record of his senile fornications. In the end, of course, he may have been right. Perhaps one should seek to know the worst about the writers one admires most, if only to be reminded that men are men and not gods. □

Face the Nation

MATTHEW SCULLY

THIS IS not one of those high-minded searches for theological common ground, a blurring of doctrinal lines for the sake of social harmony. Good will and understanding, Jacob Neusner believes, do not arise from a confusion of conviction; they arise from respect, and respect from reasoned, principled disagreement. The best tribute to another faith, he writes in *A Rabbi Talks with Jesus*, is "a good, solid argument."

A Rabbi Talks with Jesus: An Intermillenial, Interfaith Exchange, by Jacob Neusner (Doubleday, 154 pp., $21)

The first step toward clarity, Neusner argues, is to understand that Judaism is not simply the denial of Christianity. The rest of humanity—understandably, but unfairly—tends to define Judaism by its rejection of the most famous of Jews. Even the customary tributes—a "persevering" people, "tenacious," "survivors"—convey a certain exasperation, as if the Jews were driven by an admirable but baffling obstinacy instead of by affirmative convictions of their own.

To dramatize what those convictions are, Neusner imagines himself hearing and meeting Jesus in person, and explains why he would not, could not, and never will follow him.

> While Christians believe in Jesus Christ and the good news of his rule in the kingdom of Heaven, Jews believe in the Torah of Moses and form on earth and in their own flesh God's kingdom of priests and the holy people. . . . Where Jesus diverges from the revelation by God to Moses at Mount Sinai, he is wrong, and Moses is right.

So great is the rift, Neusner adds, that it's false even to speak of our Judaeo-Christian tradition, a term that relegates his living faith to an historical modifier.

Going straight to the heart of things, Jesus assured his fellow Jews that he had come not to abolish the Torah and its prophets, but to fulfill it. Yet this promise—so Neusner contends—proved untrue. On at least three occasions Jesus seems quite deliberately to supersede the Torah.

When, for instance, the Pharisees reproach Jesus for letting his disciples gather wheat on the Sabbath, he dismisses their objections as irrelevant to greater things, adding that in any

Mr. Scully is a former associate literary editor at NR *and former speechwriter for Vice President Quayle.*

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case "the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." Elsewhere he declares that "I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother"—a clear contradiction, Neusner reasons, of the commandment to honor one's father and mother.

The very nonchalance with which Jesus says these things troubles Neusner, for they so obviously challenge the Torah. In overriding the demands of the Sabbath in particular,

> Jesus and his disciples strike squarely at the critical issue: What do we do to imitate God? How do we so live as to make ourselves into that "eternal Israel" that God through the Torah has brought into being? Like the honor owing to father and mother, therefore, the celebration of the Sabbath defines what makes Israel Israel.

What's more (Neusner's central point) in all his teachings Jesus seems to speak solely to individuals, neglecting "the community as a whole, all of us together, what in today's language we would call the social order." He seems, to put it plainly, to slight eternal Israel; "he has spoken to me, but not to us."

One would have to search very hard in the literature of any faith to find a more eloquent account than Neusner gives of orthodox practice: the big things underlying the small, day-in, day-out rites and prohibitions that, to the impatient outsider, often seem so empty and tedious. ("The romance of orthodoxy," as Chesterton called these painstaking signs of fidelity.) He may be overstating his point: it's not, after all, as if Jesus had abolished the Sabbath entirely; if anything he extended the demands of faith. Nor was he calling on everyone literally to pick up and "follow," leaving home and family behind. But Neusner does convey the tension a conscientious Jew hearing Jesus would have experienced.

"[Jesus'] way so radically differs from my way, it is clear we are hearing different voices from Sinai . . ." To obscure these divisions would be an insult to Christianity, while to argue with them in good faith is an act of homage, "to pay my respect to a figure of considerable consequence."

One could point out, paying Neusner the same tribute of good-faith argument, a few problems with his own reasoning. And let's all try here to keep our composure: Neusner offers an honest case against the claims of Christianity; we can reply in kind. An argument need not be an accusation.

Neusner rejects the familiar, comforting image of Jesus as one in a line of Jewish prophets—for the very good reason that this would only raise the question of why a Jewish prophet would go around reproaching rabbis and declaring himself the Son of Man. Clearly he regarded himself as more than a teacher. I cannot follow, Neusner says in an imaginary dialogue, but "I honor you" and "wish you well."

But of course this is a polite hedge, for by Neusner's own reasoning Jesus was not just "a figure of considerable consequence." He was a figure of catastrophic consequence for the Jews, the bearer of a massive heresy, a benevolent but monumental deceiver. (A deceiver for whom, moreover, one finds no prophecy, whereas we do find prophecies in Isaiah of "the suffering servant" with "pierced hands," in Micah of the Nazarene born in Bethlehem, and similar words corresponding uncannily to the life of Jesus—about which Neusner is silent.) Calling him, as Neusner does, "disingenuous" in his teaching of the Torah and yet a wise teacher to be honored is therefore untenable—which indeed is why Neusner says quite candidly of the Pharisees' treatment of Jesus, "I would have protested. But not too much." The limited options available to Jews and non-Jews alike are the same: liar, lunatic, or Lord. And the first two are at least as hard to believe as the third.

Viewing the story from afar—more intuitively than theologically—may we not, furthermore, reasonably argue that the best evidence for the Jews as a chosen people is Christianity? Jesus, Neusner objects, offered "a message for individuals, but the Torah spoke to us all"—which seems a noble but, again to the outsider, insular vision. For the "us all" in that sentence is not humanity; and if God's overarching and everlasting concern is eternal Israel, one tribe instead of all men, where does that leave the rest of us? At what point are non-Jews invited onto the stage? Is Israel the agent of salvation or its exclusive beneficiary, the messenger or the recipient?

And so when Neusner points out that Jesus has overlooked eternal Israel, rebuking even faithful, observant Pharisees for their narrowness, concerned as much with Samarians and prostitutes as with holy men, one wants to reply, *Of course*—that's the whole idea. Whatever one might think of its own incredible claims, Christianity at least brings a certain dramatic plausibility to the Biblical story, moving events forward, broadening the circle, answering a question that would otherwise linger through the ages: Chosen for what?

It may be that to Christians, the Jews will always seem the messengers who missed their moment, noble remnants from an epoch now over—like those old Japanese soldiers who in the Fifties and Sixties would turn up on some Pacific island still at their posts, unaware that the world drama had shifted. Better, though—whatever one makes of "eternal Israel"—to wonder why it is that Judaism has been the eternal enemy of every secular mania throughout modern times; why history's most malignant tyrants have all reserved a special hatred for the Jews. And as Walker Percy wondered, why, if the Jews do not still bear some divine mission on earth, do we walk around the capitals of the world and not find any Hittites?

Reading *A Rabbi Talks with Jesus* one is reminded what it is that has always aroused the wrath of the hateful—not just the faith of the Jews, but their faithfulness. □

FILM

Precarious Genres

JOHN SIMON

IS the woman's picture still a reputable genre? At a time when women have just about achieved equality with men, does the two-handkerchief movie still make sense? Back in 1939, Leo McCarey, with the help of such able scenarists as Delmar Daves and Donald Ogden Stewart, turned a story by Mildred Cram and himself into a directorial triumph. Charles

Mr. Simon is NR's film critic.

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Boyer and Irene Dunne enacted it to sheer tear-jerking perfection, spicing the weepy sentimentality with healthy dollops of wit, and out came one of the most romantic love stories in screen history, *Love Affair*. It was one of my 14-year-old self's favorite Hollywood movies, right up there with *Wuthering Heights* and *Dark Victory*.

Since Hollywood can never leave well enough alone, the picture had to be remade in 1957 in not quite glorious Eastmancolor, updated and expanded from 89 minutes to a soggier 114. The writers were again Daves and McCarey, with the latter again directing. The stars, this time, were Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr, a shade less romantic, but for those like Nora Ephron, too young to have known the original version, sublime. With ***Sleepless in Seattle***, Miss Ephron has, fairly shamelessly, endeavored to direct a kind of variation on that film, producing a Nineties equivalent with the same mixture of laughter and tears, side-splitting and eye-wetting. A very, very little of it comes off, but a great deal merely looks retro, manipulative, contrived—an exploitation of the soft center that presumably lurks under the toughest feminist carapace, and that putatively thrives in the newly sensitized male bosom.

Sam Baldwin (Tom Hanks), a charming young Chicago architect, has just lost his beloved wife, Maggie. He is inconsolable, far more so than his sweet but practical eight-year-old son, Jonah (Ross Malinger). Sam moves to Seattle, to start afresh, away from haunting memories. He settles into a well-appointed house by the water, and obtains a comparably desirable job. But Maggie (Carey Lowell) haunts him even there, and he cannot so much as go out on a date. It promises to be a very bleak Christmas, so Jonah calls up a phone-in show run by a phony woman therapist—Dr. Marcia, as she likes to be called—and tells her about his dad's plight. Soon she gets Sam on the phone and coaxes out of him a confession of how much he misses his dead wife. Jeff Arch, who wrote the arch story on which he, David S. Ward, and Nora Ephron based their screenplay, probably thinks that Sam's platitudes are enchanting, and so manifestly do two thousand women who send Sam love letters and marriage proposals pronto.

Meanwhile back in Baltimore, there is Annie Reed, a feature writer for the *Baltimore Sun*, who hears that broadcast. She is engaged to and living with Walter (Bill Pullman), a nice enough fellow, though abounding in assorted allergies. But once she hears how wonderfully Sam is in touch with his emotions, she is a goner. Her eyes fill with tears, her heart with overgrown puppy love, and she practically drives off the road. Her yearning for him grows, and finally she too writes a letter that a friend forwards to Sam, whom Dr. Marcia has dubbed Sleepless in Seattle. It is, however, Jonah, not Sleepless, who screens the love mail that is still coming in, and Annie's cunning missive, mostly about baseball, grabs him. Pretty soon Jonah is telling Sleepless that this is the wife for him, and the mother that he, Jonah, must have.

I could go into a recital of the various cutesy devices Miss Ephron & Co. come up with to bring Annie and Sleepless together, as well as of the tricksy devices with which they come up to keep them apart. Annie, it seems, is the sort of person who'll travel three thousand miles to Seattle, only *not* to have the guts to accost Sleepless and son, by whom she is, from a safe distance, entranced. And Sleepless, seeing her, and promptly falling in love—even without knowing that she is the Annie who homered her way into Jonah's heart—is the sort of person who'll say a tongue-tied, smitten hello to her, and, upon getting back an equally love-sick hello, let the beloved run away. True, he has been halfheartedly involved with Victoria (Barbara Garrick), a young woman who guffaws so ghoulishly at every unfunny thing he says as to make the angels weep. Still, even this Rabelaisian rictus proves enough to drive a preposterous wedge between Sleepless and his Dream Come True!

So the movie spends most of its slumberous hundred minutes on keeping Sleepless and Annie sundered, and it is hapless little Jonah who must resort to a stratagem, as hazardous as it is unbelievable, to bring the predestined lovers together in the last reel—on top of the Empire State Building, where else? The entire picture is a collection of nauseating quotations from and references to *An Affair to Remember*, both visual and verbal. And as it wiggles on, it becomes a pre-coitus interruptus of gigantic dimensions.

If it had any bearing on reality—which the film proudly and repeatedly denies—Annie could very happily marry Walter, a decent fellow who takes rejection with touching magnanimity. But no, Sleepless and Feckless must finally take each other by the hand to the sound of Jimmy Durante croaking out "Make Someone Happy," and go off together with eight-year-old Reckless to stop being sleepless—in Seattle, or Baltimore, or Timbuctoo, for all anyone not partial to cutesy-poo, but also amazingly smartass, soap operas cares. Perhaps a sequel, *Smartass in Smyrna*, is indicated.

■ Of all movie genres, none is more alien to me than the technological

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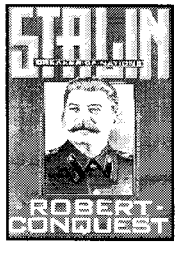

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thriller. I mean the kind of film whose excitement depends largely on computers, fax machines, surveillance devices, and other technological wonders suited to make action mechanistic, characters robotic, dialogue jargon, and villainy thrive. This is neither the old *film noir* nor the old-fashioned melodrama in which people were still people, however corrupt, and not mere adjuncts to diabolically cunning machines that rule the world.

The Firm, based on John Grisham's best-selling novel, is such a movie, in which the characters vie with the gadgetry as to who can be more machine-like. And when, in a long film, everything moves at an unremittingly breakneck pace—intrigue and counterintrigue, plus the dialogue itself—I feel that Chaplin, in *Modern Times*, engorged by a noncomputerized machine, was still living in Arcadia. O for the thrillers by Simenon, Agatha Christie, and their likes, when the dramatis personae were not Martians with hypertrophic heads housing computers instead of minds.

Mitch McDeere, our hero, is the top Harvard Law School graduate of the year, and of all the law firms competing for him, a small Memphis one, Bendini, Lambert & Locke, bids highest and gets him. Mitch, from a poor family, and Abby, his well-born grade-school-teacher wife, are a model couple until the Firm takes over their lives. At first by forceful insinuation, then by discreet intimidation, they guide the couple into luxurious but regimented existences, highly conventional on the outside, the better to hide the Firm's criminal activities. The forty-odd tax lawyers are experts at bending the law, or invisibly mending it where they rip it. Among their money-laundering clients are the Chicago Mafia, but the ultimate profiteers are they themselves. If someone wants to quit the Firm, he finds that the only way out is feet forward.

Abby senses trouble right away, but by the time Mitch catches on, they are enmeshed beyond reprieve. It brings Mitch closer to the loving older brother, Ray, whose very existence he denied. Ray, a wrestler, accidentally killed a man in a barroom brawl, and is doing a long stretch in jail. Ray's friend, a private eye, wants to help him, but is gunned down by the Firm's goons (don't ask me what led them to him) while his secretary-mistress is hiding inside his desk. The FBI has approached Mitch: they will pay him and even get Ray out on parole if Mitch will take on the dangerous job of being their inside man, helping to catch his fellow illegal beagles. Meanwhile the Firm has entrapped the loving Mitch into a quick tumble into the nocturnal sands of a Cayman Island beach with a pretty hooker. When, driven by the threat of blackmail, he confesses to Abby, she goes to pieces and sets out to leave him.

And more, alas, much more. Sydney Pollack nudges the movie on as if it were a marathon run at a hundred-yard-dash pace, and the three top-flight screenwriters—David Rabe, Robert Towne, and David Rayfiel—may even have turned it into a relay race, passing ideas back and forth like batons or, perhaps, hot potatoes. An array of good actors, led by Gene Hackman, Holly Hunter, and Ed Harris, makes the best of a bad business, but Tom Cruise and Jeanne Tripplehorn, as the romantic leads, fare less well. Going through the same hectic motions as always, with the same computer-controlled panic expression and high-pitched voice, Cruise zooms through the movie more like a missile than an actor. □

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire, by David Remnick (Random House, 576 pp., $25)

WHAT did Chou En-lai think of the French Revolution, he was asked. "It's too soon to tell," he replied. It may be too soon to tell about the meaning of the second Russian Revolution but not for David Remnick, the *Washington Post* Moscow correspondent for the four crucial years of that revolution, and currently a *New Yorker* staff writer. His big book, a skillful narration of the beginning and end of that revolution, is to my mind the leading candidate for the non-fiction Pulitzer Prize, it's that good. The book's enormous documentation and historical background are fortified by hundreds of interviews not only with Soviet officials but with ordinary folk. Not all of Mr. Remnick's pages, however, contain revelations. After all, before Mikhail Gorbachev's *glasnost* there was Robert Conquest's *glasnost* in the 1960s and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *glasnost* in the 1970s. What distinguishes Mr. Remnick's book is a superb combination of controlled passion, reportorial skill, and an acute political intelligence which, for example, sees in Mikhail Gorbachev a foolish Soviet apparatchik who thought he could also be a politician. Perhaps the most interesting throwaway line in the book is by V. M. Molotov, who in his last days told an interviewer: "Compared to Lenin, Stalin was a mere lamb."

—ARNOLD BEICHMAN

Degenerate Moderns: Modernity as Rationalized Sexual Misbehavior, by E. Michael Jones (Ignatius, 259 pp., $16.95)

SOMEONE needs to come up with a term to describe the complex of ideologies that forms the modern point of view. Freudianism, sexual liberation, secularism, liberalism, deconstructionism: they are like a band of unruly children who all look somehow alike, suggesting a common father or mother. It would be nice to know the family name. Mr. Jones, editor of the Catholic magazine *Fidelity*, at least tells us what it is in those smudged little faces that reminds you one of the other: the resemblance is in the sheer convenience of such ideologies, especially to their inventors. By his telling, the founding figures of modernity had sexual sins on their conscience which made it highly convenient to dream up, say, the anthropological theories of Margaret Mead. (Miss Mead—who apparently indulged in adultery and lesbianism—"discovered" that the natives of Samoa were sexually liberated, and thus much healthier than us uptight Westerners. Her discovery was later found to be unsubstantiable.) For those who already doubt the claims of modernity, *Degenerate Moderns* provides a further, and excellent, cause for suspicion. So it's a shame that the insightful Mr. Jones insists on reducing practically every thought of his subjects to an expression of repressed guilt, anti-Catholic prejudice, or both. By the end, his hounding has become so monotonous and predictable as to make suspicious readers wonder if the theories of E. Michael Jones are themselves a bit too convenient—to Mr. Jones.

—DAVID KLINGHOFFER

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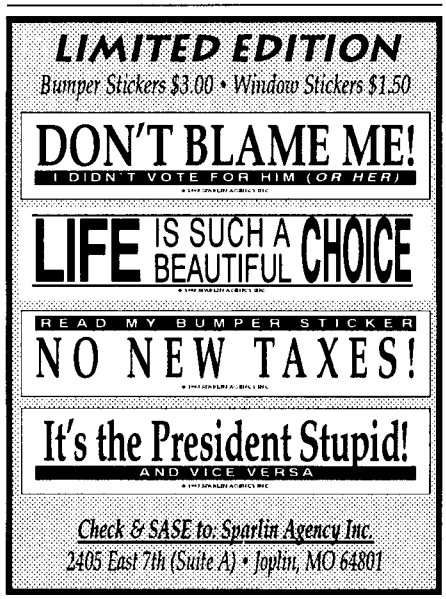
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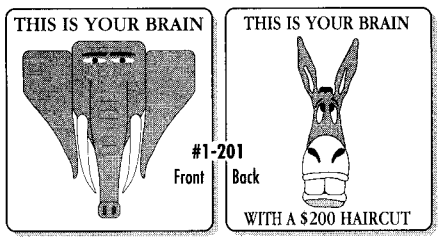

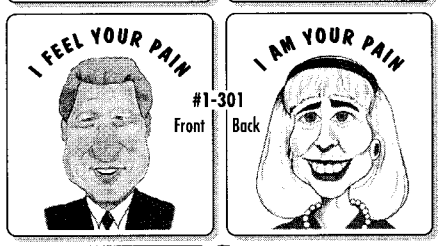

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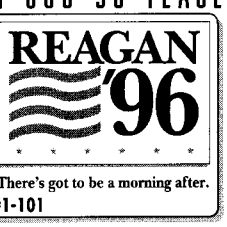

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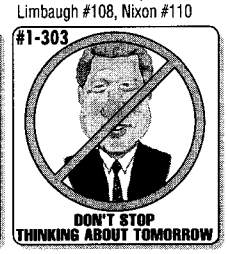

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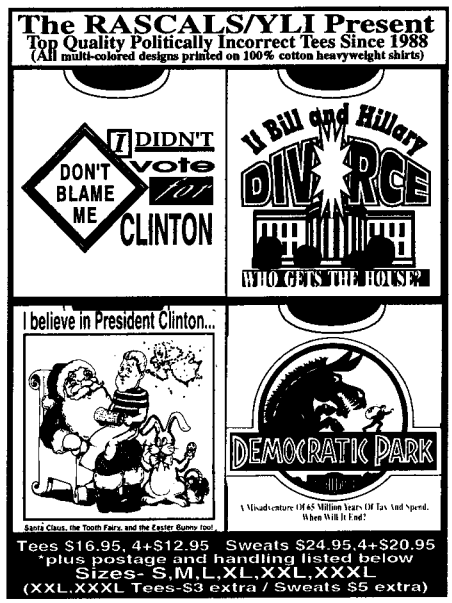
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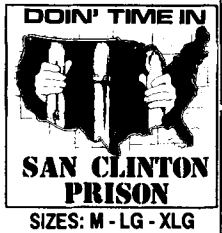

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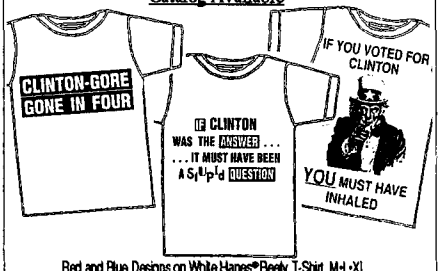
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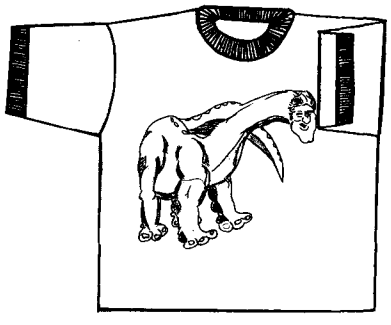

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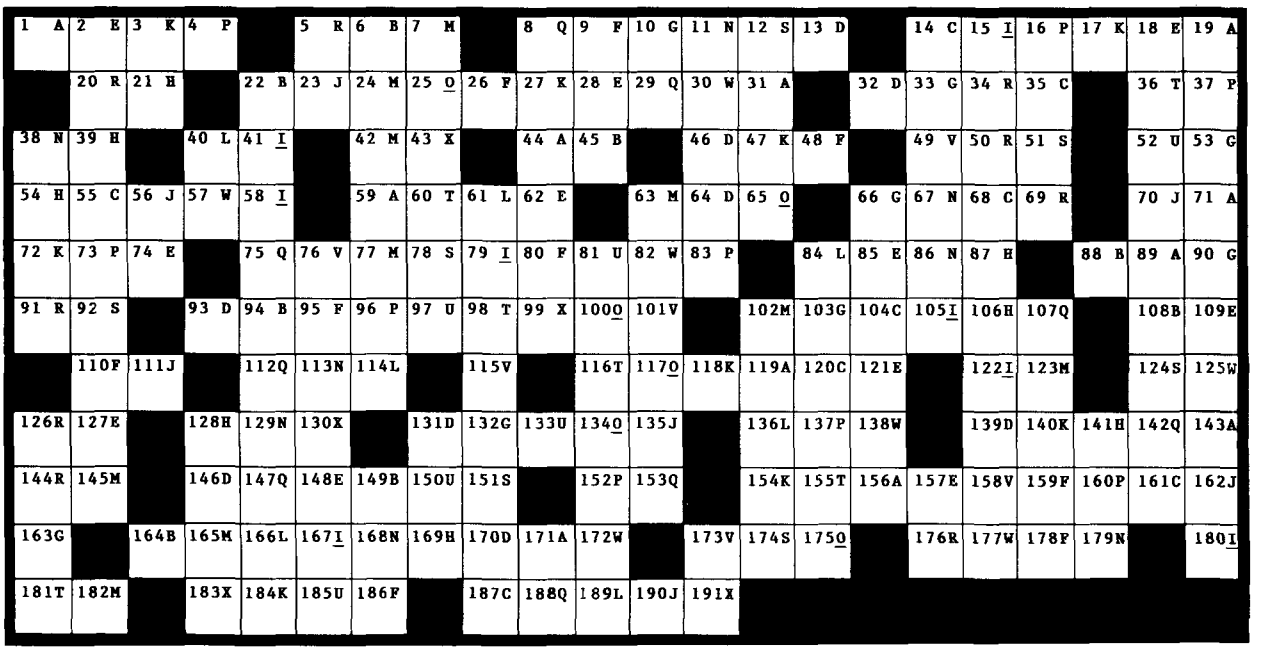
TRANS-O-GRAM / Kem Putney



DEFINITIONS

A. Spirited kind of author? 119 89 143 19 59 1 171 44 156 71 31

B. Sometimes they are hurled 164 22 108 149 6 94 88 45

C. Passé 161 187 14 68 55 104 35 120

D. Netherlands seaport 139 131 93 46 170 146 13 64 32

E. Descriptive of the foul-talking streetcleaner 74 28 121 109 18 85 127 148 157 62 2

F. Involved 110 9 159 95 26 80 178 186 48

G. Unrestrained 90 132 66 33 163 10 103 53

H. Curse 128 21 141 106 169 39 87 54

I. Tyro 105 167 122 41 180 58 15 79

J. Certain southern Egyptians 135 190 70 56 23 162 111

K. The Lord's Supper, to many 140 184 27 47 3 118 72 154 17

L. Belly laughs 189 40 136 84 61 114 166

M. Smooth and graceful 102 123 63 77 24 42 165 7 182 145

N. Cornwallis's Waterloo 179 86 67 38 11 113 168 129

O. Christian holy day 134 117 100 25 175 65

P. One means of heating 96 16 83 152 37 4 160 137 73

Q. Puzzles 153 147 112 75 29 8 142 188 107

R. Lack of meaning 126 69 176 5 20 144 50 91 34

S. Sharpened the knife 51 174 92 124 78 12 151

T. Apparition 36 98 181 155 116 60

U. Furry aquatic mammals 97 133 81 150 52 185

V. Summery furniture material 76 158 173 101 115 49

W. Tanner's material 177 172 30 57 125 82 138

X. Spicy French city 130 99 183 43 191

DIRECTIONS

The object of TRANS-O-GRAM is to fill in the puzzle diagram by guessing the words from their definitions, and transferring each letter of the guessed word to the correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. When the diagram is filled in it will spell out a quotation from some published work (reading normally from left to right, black boxes indicating the ends of words); also, when the words have all been filled in above, their initial letters will spell out the author and title of the quoted work. The acrostic feature, and the relative word-lengths in the diagram, will assist in the solution. Spelling and definitions on the authority of *Webster's Deluxe Unabridged Dictionary*, Second Edition.

Solution to Last Issue's Trans-O-Gram. STEVEN STARK: *No Camelot Here*: "If Bill Clinton is well on his way to becoming an unsuccessful president, it's because he appears to have been captured by a Washington culture in which tactics count far more than substance . . . and no one takes words seriously."

For Vol. II of the puzzle collection, send $5.95 (plus $1 S&H) to: T-Gram Plus, 3279 Lake Powell, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185.

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On Preaching To the Japanese

NEW YORK, JULY 7

There is something a little forlorn about the President of the United States lecturing Japan about what it should do to help the United States cope with problems the President can't cope with because vested American interests won't let him. What interests? They are legion, but the sovereign "interest," in America, is ideological. For instance, that class-division, collectivist-oriented perspective that animates the persistent attacks on Reaganism. They read as attacks in *Pravda* on bourgeois economic practices used to do. Such analyses were frequently introduced with the phrase, "As is well known . . ." Whenever that phrase appeared, you could absolutely predict that what followed would be false. As in, "As is well known, babies are born with 11 fingers."

The *New York Times* serves as a kind of tuning fork for these economic solecists. But you have to hand it to the grey lady, every now and again she permits a little blast in her own columns very much at her expense. Thus last week a letter from a Steven L. Eber of Coral Gables, Florida, identified only as an "investment advisor." We do not doubt that that is what he is, but he is also an archivist of *New York Times* editorials on the economy, and here is one he quoted from October 2, 1990, which was on the eve of the enactment of the new tax law that loosed George Bush's lips and perhaps cost him the election.

"The budget agreement between congressional leaders and the Bush Administration," the *New York Times* told the world, "cuts defense too little. It increases energy taxes too little. It taxes rich families too little. Even so, the coarse compromise would cut the deficit by half a trillion dollars in five years. . . . The best part of the package is what it will not do. It won't throw the economy into recession."

What then happened was not a decrease of a half-trillion in the deficit but an increase of $700 billion; not a boom, but a two-year recession from which we haven't fully emerged.

This time around (June 25) the *New York Times* encourages Mr. Clinton's approach, distinguishing it from what happened under Reagan, when "social divisions sharpened and attitudes toward suffering took on a Dickensian hardness." Under Reagan, per-capita spending on all anti-poverty programs (using constant dollars) was $462, up from $367 when he took over from Carter. "Cravenly eyeing the 1994 elections, Mr. Dole and the Senate Republicans are peddling a tired and dangerous vision that can only add to the deficit that piled up while Ronald Reagan led the country into the land of dreamy dreams."

It is certainly a dreamy statistic for the *Times*/Clinton that in the last term under Reagan, the deficit didn't climb. It went down from $212 billion to $153 billion. As for counting on more revenue from raising the taxes of the wealthy, here are some historical figures. The capital-gains tax rate was reduced from 48 per cent to 20 per cent between 1978 and 1982, resulting in an upswing in capital-gains tax receipts. Effective January 1, 1987, the tax rate was raised. Within four years, notwithstanding a stock-market high that year (1991), capital-gains tax revenues diminished to $20 billion, from their peak of $53 billion in 1986.

One wonders whether Japanese officials won't look back with nostalgia at when visiting American Presidents spewed forth the contents of their stomachs, rather than the contents of their minds. Mr. Clinton fancies himself to have hugely added moral leverage, now that he has triumphed in Congress with his new budget bill. The reaction to Clintonomics the day after the President arrived in Tokyo was a fall of 34 points in the stock market, and renewed signs of inflation. This is hardly calculated to increase the prestige of the President arriving in Japan with the air of someone who had just triumphed over economic forces back home, and is prepared to do as much for Japan.

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What would cause an international surge in the economy would be an obituary column in the *New York Times* reading roughly as follows: "R I P. All editors of the *New York Times* who have written editorials on the economy since the departure of Henry Hazlitt and Roger Starr. They passed away yesterday at various sanatoria in which they attempted to recover from the effects of reading scrapbooks containing their prescriptions for the U.S. economy. Services will be held in New York Harbor, featuring fireworks." □

Is Multiculturalism The Answer?

NEW YORK, JULY 2

The sensation-seekers are amply satisfied, and every day leaves the betting man guessing whether the number of people who tried to blow up Manhattan will match, or exceed, the number of prostitutes murdered by Joel Rifkin. Of course, there are precedents for both crimes—massacres in the pursuit of *jihad* are historically commonplace, and the penchant of Bluebeards to eliminate the current woman to make way for her successor is a familiar legend in most cultures.

But suddenly we are up against something we have no cultural training for. When during Reconstruction the Ku Klux Klan emerged, we were so to speak ready to contend with it. Whatever the laxities of the law in the South during Reconstruction, there was never that condition of anarchy that authorized lynching Negro dissenters or flogging white suspects. Moreover, there was the ultimate appeal to the Southerner, namely the word of the Christian God: the sanctions of the culture of the South were available to the critics of such behavior. A century later Martin Luther King Jr. appealed to the higher law of Americans when he invoked the teachings of Christ as dispositive.

But we are dealing now with that

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creature, the Muslim fundamentalist, which we have all along thought comfortably to be a problem of—other cultures. We knew recently that the Algerians decided to forgo democracy for a spell, when a democratic exercise brought in Muslim fundamentalists in a general election. We knew that the assassination of Anwar Sadat in Cairo was the act of Muslim fundamentalists who were protesting his civilized attitude toward Israel; and, again, we reasoned that this was a regional problem. When the Ayatollah locked up American diplomats, the suggestion was made in this space that an appeal to the Ayatollah using Koranic language having to do with justice might be the best available weapon; and such an attempt was made, but Khomeini wasn't somebody to whom it was easy to lecture on the more benevolent strictures of the Koran.

We are after all face to face with something very different from the religion common to our own culture. Even in the most theocratic of times, St. Thomas Aquinas rejected the idea that the state is obliged to tailor its laws exactly to those of the Divine. But that is not so in Islam, where The Law as put forth in Scripture (the Koran) and Tradition (Sunnah) is to be reflected exactly not only in the personal lives of believers, but in the laws of the state as well. The word "islam" means "submission." The government of Muslim states is explicitly an institution of God. Moreover, the governments are to irradiate Islam not merely by the example of the rulers, but by the institution of *jihad*.

Again, that word literally means "struggle," or endeavor, and can be used to describe self-discipline. But it is most notoriously known as the fountainhead of the holy war which enjoins Islam to expand its reach over the world. There was a period in Christian history when the same impulses were felt, but it has been centuries since Christians excused spreading the word by shedding blood. Chapter 2, Verse 193 of the Koran enjoins the faithful to "fight in the way of God against those who fight against you, but do not commit aggression. Fight against them until sedition is no more and allegiance is rendered to God alone; but if they make an end, then make no aggression except against evil doers." That seems to say that there is no need to blow up Manhattan after Manhattanites all pay allegiance to Islam.

The current enthusiasm in academic circles for multiculturalism has got to face some difficult problems. The Koran (Chapter 2, Verse 228), for instance, informs us that "The husband is one degree higher than the wife, because he earns by his strength and expends on his wife." The institutional implications of this we are all familiar with: From all appearances, the only time men and women get together socially in Islam is when they copulate. Somewhere along the line, the feminist movement in America is going to have to give up either feminism, or multiculturalism.

So we are going to have to take explicit notice of the incompatibility of our own culture and that of the fundamentalist Muhammadan, and we need to organize our immigration laws with some reference to this problem. The idea of welcoming the alien doesn't call for inviting him to blow up Ellis Island en route to citizenship. □

Frontier Manners

NEW YORK, JULY 9

Many years ago, in his important book *Suicide of the West*, the late philosopher-strategist James Burnham did a novel thing. His objective was to attempt diagrammatically to distinguish between the liberal and the conservative. He identified the "liberal syndrome," and later investigators fastened on a single issue that, more than any others, divides the two camps, namely gun control. Over the years I have kept an ear cocked to the question, and I'd warrant that it is still so; that although more conservatives now than then believe in some limits to instant accessibility of weapons, on the main point they are still adamant. That an American citizen be permitted to buy a gun when he wants one.

The day's news speaks of Houston, Texas. Another tragic event, a mere cipher in the statistical archives (two more homicides). But something about the Houston story has seized the imagination of the whole town, and the reason is that nobody quite knows what to do about the society that brought forth Peter Anthony Cantu, 18; Derrick Sean O'Brien, 18; Efrain Perez, 17; Raul Omar Villareal, 17; Jose Ernesto Medellin, 18; and an unidentified boy, 14. The 14-year-old, if found guilty, could be sentenced to forty years in prison. The other five could be executed.

What the boys were accused of doing was stopping two teenage girls who were returning home after a swimming party. The girls were seized, raped, beaten, and killed.

Now homicide isn't exactly like a total eclipse at Houston. These last were the 249th and 250th in a year only half spent, which suggests 500 deaths by New Year's Eve. Why is this extrapolation so confident? The answer to this reaches down to the marrow of Houston's depression. It is that—nobody knows what to do about crime.

Consider the gentlemen above. Reporter Sam Howe Verhovek writes for the *New York Times*, "Even after the girls had stopped writhing from their torment, several of the youths repeatedly stomped on them to make sure that they were dead, the authorities said. The girls' naked bodies were then dragged into the woods," where they were discovered four days later after a frantic citywide search. How does the resident of Houston (or of Washington, Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, Phoenix) guard against coming upon such as the gentlemen listed above?

What is progressively clear is that government isn't going to cope with the problem. Radical measures come to mind, but they are dismissed as totally incompatible with Western social commitments. We could send a commission to Singapore to find out how they handle the crime problem there, but to institute such procedures as are used in Singapore would indeed finally require us to impeach Earl Warren.

What citizens do in fact impose on themselves is a very sharp limitation of freedoms we are supposed to enjoy—e.g., safe passage, day or night, across parks or down shaded streets. But the ultimate sanction is the protective weapon. An essayist writing in *The Public Interest* a dozen years ago made the point that critics of handguns fail to take into account the measure of relief that they bring, in particular to older people who live in urban areas in which crime is rampant. The point was brought home by Mr. Verhovek. "At the site of the killings," he writes, ". . . passers-by have left notes and flowers in memory of Miss Ertman and Miss Pena. But others, including 69-year-old Arthur Malveaux, . . . seem to have concluded that the enduring lesson of the crime is that their world is a chaotic place in which people ultimately have to fend for themselves. Mr. Malveaux lives at Springhill Apartments, where the two girls had been enjoying their pool party until minutes before they were killed. 'I've got three locks on my door and two loaded pistols by my bedside,' he said. 'So anybody who comes in my door, God rest his soul.' "

In four generations, frontier habits return. Not to isolated outposts in the country, but to urban centers. □

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Are You Talkin' to Me?

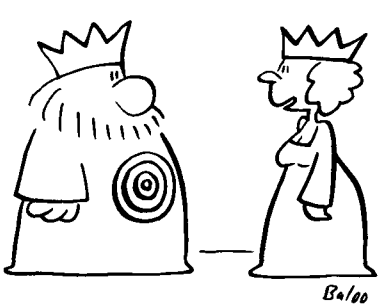
"WELL, of course," she sniffed, "as an Anglo you probably *like* all that blond-haired, blue-eyed business. But if you're looking for *Oklahoma!*, try Kansas City. *Oklahoma!* doesn't belong in Los Angeles." She pronounced the name of the city with the hard *g*, emphasizing its Spanish root.

Forget that connecting Oklahoma with Kansas City is akin to equating Mexico City with Havana; overlook the fact that most white Californians of three generations' seniority are Okies or Arkies; never mind that few of the geniuses who crafted that milestone *Oklahoma!* had either blond hair or blue eyes; even ignore that the woman summarily dismissing me as "Anglo" is the highest official of the L.A. school board.

But please, *do* remember I am decidedly not an Anglo. I am, in fact, the spurious result of several hundred years of inbreeding in a Polish ghetto most of whose inhabitants are long dead, the victims of pogroms or Nazis. My more enterprising ancestors emigrated, and thanks to their Darwinistic spirit and courage, I now languish in Southern California sunshine. My history is shared with many Americans, including not only the authors of *Oklahoma!* but also the man who crafted "God Bless America." I was not born in Anglia, nor Essex ("Land of the East Saxons"), nor Sussex, nor even the unoffending Middlesex. I am a Jew, one of the millions who found in the Great American Experiment a refuge from millennia of lives that were generally nasty, brutish, and short. When those masses huddled on these shores, the immigrants who had preceded them—often true Anglos—found the new arrivals unpleasant additions. But, in the spirit of the Founding Fathers, they offered a tacit social contract: be who you like, they said, speak your own language at home, practice your religion, teach your children of the ways of the "old country"—so long as you accept that there is a pre-existing culture that defines rules of public intercourse, establishes details of civic politeness, and regulates the legal life of the people.

It turned out to be the best deal these ragged refugees could have imagined. Recently, I sat at the bedside of a dying nonagenarian, who recalled with painful clarity the horrors of his childhood in *Mitteleuropa*. "Some country, this America," were his second to last words on this planet. "I get to live out my natural span and die in my own bed. For people like me, to die in comfort at your own leisure was once a stupid fantasy."

How little to ask of your adopted home, I thought. That patchwork of people the Anglos absorbed could hardly have been a more "multicultural" bunch: German miners, Irish farmers, Sicilian peasants, Polish tailors, Norwegian fishermen, a hundred tongues, a score of religions, a host of ancient hatreds and suspicions. They bought into this undeniably Anglo deal, and both they and America were so much richer for it. But the best part was that in their private life they were indeed allowed to treasure and hallow the traditions of their forebears. They were patient, encouraging their children to excellence and achievement confident that their accumulated accomplishments would empower the whole community.



"Dear, I think you should have a word with your valet."

Granted, this model would not—given our history, could not—succeed for black Americans. But to the credit of the immigrants, once they established themselves, they volunteered their energies, and often their blood, to the struggle for civil rights.

An imperfect model perhaps, but the most efficient and elegant one in recorded human history. It has continued to work well for Koreans, Vietnamese, and certain other groups now arriving at the new Golden Door of Los Angeles International Airport.

BUT the L.A. school-board official is an impatient woman; she sees political empowerment as a zero-sum game. In the same way that Anna Quindlen justified excluding boys from "Take Our Daughters to Work Day" as a valuable way to teach them how it feels to be ignored, my school official feels she can't gain a place in America's rich tapestry unless some other group's needlepoint is being unthreaded. She lumps us all together as "Anglos," thus creating a racial bloc that has no basis in science, history, or private culture.

We are not bound by race: what we *do* share is a commitment to political victories that reach back to Magna Carta, a willingness to respect the individual rights of our neighbors, an acceptance of English as the common tongue, and a belief in human dignity that, for most, defines the very idea of America. But her deceitful model is useful to her political ambitions.

I recognize that the American Experiment is not over, that new immigrants will change us as our predecessors did in their time. But that doesn't mean I accept a change in the science that defines the project.

I am not an Anglo. I am an American. I pray of her, join hands with me in making that claim even prouder tomorrow than it is today. But to do so she would have to throw off her mantle of victimhood, become too much like the rest of us. It is her own inadequacies, her own lack of self-esteem, that require her to see America as an amalgam of competing racial groups.

I take comfort in the teachings of Rabbi Hillel: "It is not the name you call me that matters, only the name to which I respond." It worked for those earlier immigrants as they struggled to fulfillment in America. It will work for me.

—LIONEL CHETWYND

Mr. Chetwynd is an Oscar-nominated filmmaker whose credits include writing and directing The Hanoi Hilton.

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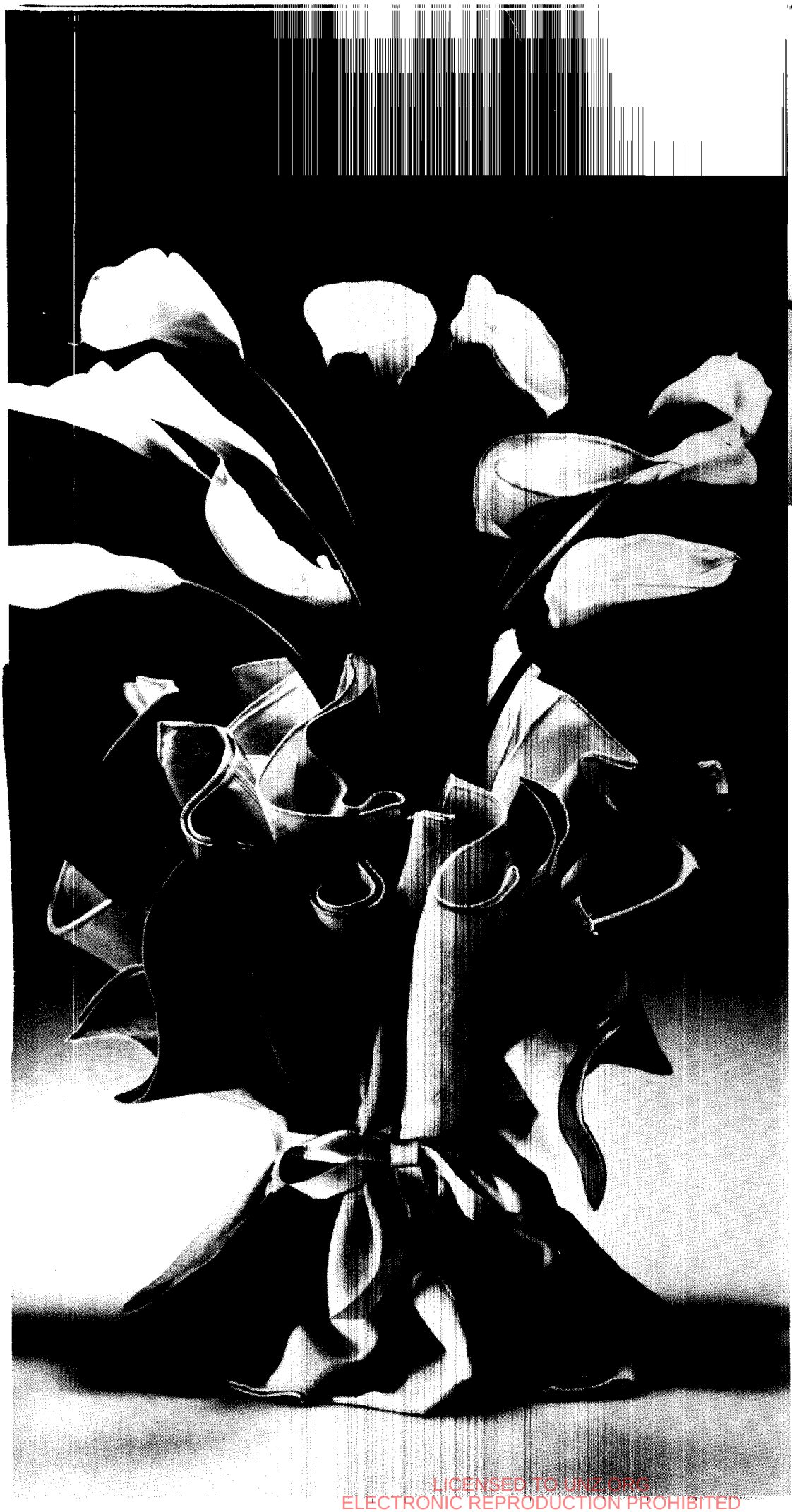

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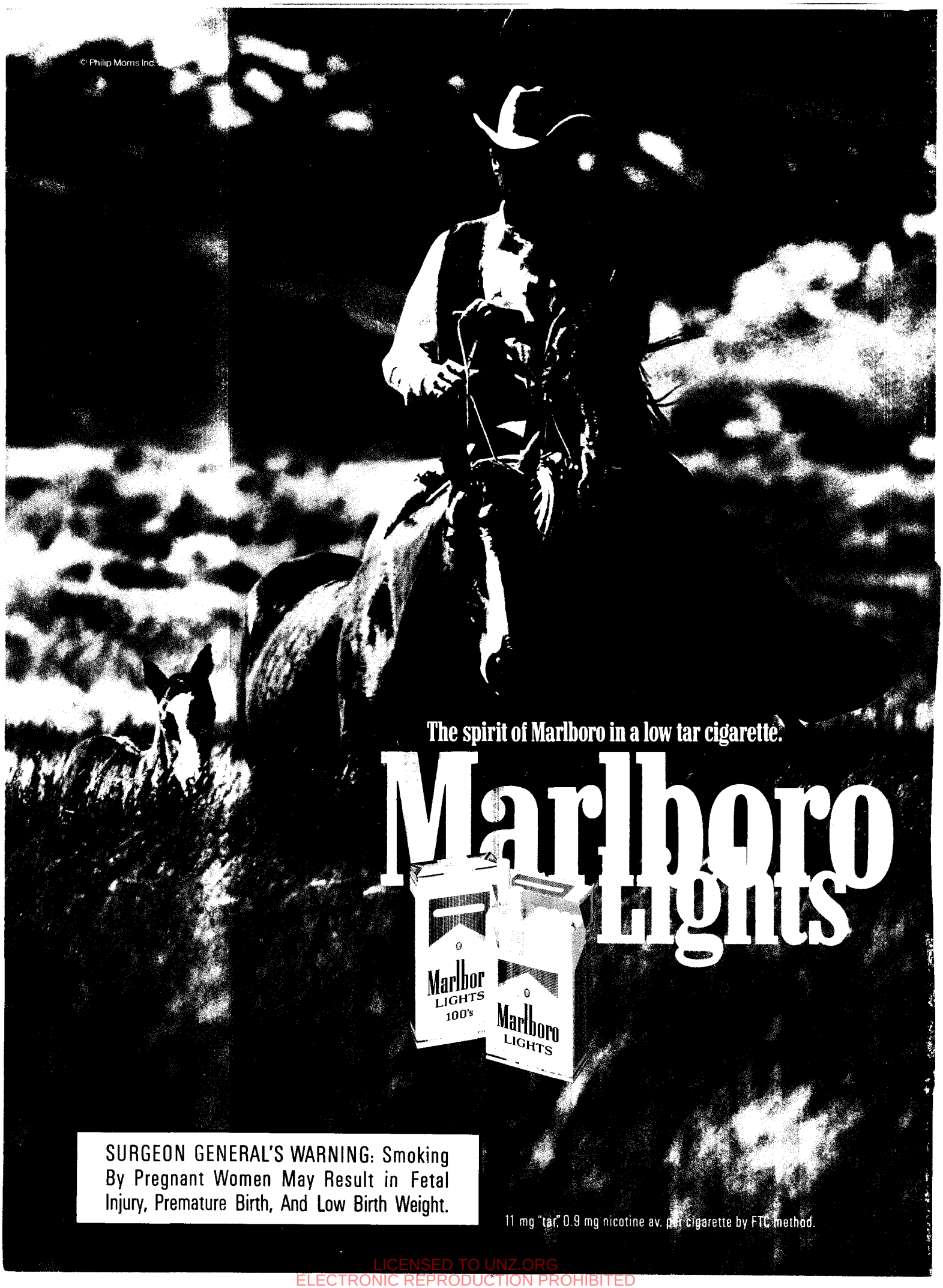
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